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The Ghazal and the Canso : Parallels of Courtly Passion

PATRICK M. THOMAS

The dictum *Deus caritas est* (I John 4.8), God is love, through the prism of courtly literature becomes reversed: love is God. To be more precise: human love is god, i.e., *amor deus est*.¹ The mystic erotic we discovered in mediaeval India² is no less present in the literary works of mediaeval Persia.³ What is remarkable are the striking parallels between Bernart de Ventadorn's lambent *versos of fin'amors* and certain pieces of Persian poetry. It is not without interest that the mystical *ghazal*,⁴ which employs the same erotic diction and imagery as the courtly lyric, gained impetus in the late 12th century (Meisami, "Persona," 131), which is at least somewhat contemporaneous with the life of the troubadour (Dimrock 3; Paden 413). Of course, there are differences. Whereas in India we find the influence of the impassioned bhakti cult⁵ (Thomas, "Mystic," 220), in Persia one speaks of the importance of Sufism:

.... we must remember that for the Sufi poets, world and everything in it are loci of theophany for the Divine Reality. But by the very nature of things, certain loci display this Reality more clearly than others. Among its more direct manifestations are "wine, women, and song." Each is an image and symbol of higher realities, and eventually of the Highest Reality (Chittick 195).

From a broader viewpoint, Meisami notes that

Nizami's⁶ (d. 1209) verse romance the *Haft Paykar* reflects an increasing penetration of esoteric learning into "the more imaginative sides of intellectual culture in Islam." The chief branches of such learning included philosophical thought, Shi' i / Isma'il and mystical *ta'wil*,⁷ and a personal discipline and ecstatic visions of the mystics; all three areas tended to overlap and interpenetrate one another (Meisami, "Design," 461).

As in mediaeval Persia, so also in mediaeval Provence, religious thought was part and parcel of quotidian existence. *Fin'amors* was not a game, but a

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secularized ritual (Kohler 462). What is of interest here is how certain talented poets have prometheically stolen fire from heaven, as it were, to clothe, Eros numenistically. From the "holistic" literary approach, the horizontal mode of consciousness is paradoxically covered over by the vertical mode (Hollister 4-18).

It is a question of ambiguity. Annemarie Schimmel, for example, has underlined this aspect of Persian mystical poetry. With regard to the images of sensory love, she rejects the extreme positions that they are purely sensual or purely mystical. Instead, she opts for an intermediate position that stresses balance: "the oscillation between the two levels of being is consciously maintained" (Schimmel 288). The viewpoint of William Chittick is more nuance. He suggests that, while the Schimmel hypothesis is essentially correct, nonetheless given the context of Sufi metaphysics, the mystical must take precedence (Chittick 199). Be that as it may, there are times when the axis is evidently shifted toward the sensual.⁸ Consider, for example, the manner in which Hafiz⁹ employs the Shab-e Qadr, the night when Muhammed received inspiration from above through descending angels:

On such a precious and noble Night of Power it is my
desire to sleep with you till day, (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 24)

Hafiz states in one of his most famous ghazals:

Last night at dawn, they freed me from grief ;
in that darkness of night they gave me the Water of in Life.
What a blessed dawn that was, and what an
auspicious night, that Night of Power when
they gave me this new privilege. QG 183 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 24-25)

It is not surprising that, despite the mystical overtones, these verses have almost unanimously been interpreted as reflective of carnal union with the beloved (Meisami, "Technique," 25).¹¹ Although troubadour poetry tends in the direction of *cor e cors*, the fact is never celebrated in verse.¹² Donald Frank puts it succinctly:

The concept of love as desire is at the base of the troubadour concept of pure or true love (Frank 13).

In his *Allegory of Love*, C. S. Lewis has proposed that this new unorthodox Religion of Love mimicked Christianity externally while simulataneously vitiating it from within (Lewis 18-22). Peter Dronke has pointed out the importance of mystical, noetic, and Sapiential language in the troubadour tradition:

... the mystical language has led us to a deeper understanding of what the love-poets meant by *dignite et la beaute la passion dsns la ffrance*, 'le pouvoir ennoblissant'; the noetic language has made more precise for us that way towards union with the beloved 'qui fait valoir l'amant'; the Sapientian language has shown us something of the hidden meanings that that are possible in 'le culte d'un objet excellent' (Dronke 97).

The innate opposition between external religiosity and internal lust does not seem to be the case with mediaeval Persian poetry. There appears to be a closer comparison to Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* where the sensual and the mystical are like parallel lines, distinct yet joined together by the poet's magical woof or words (Thomas, "Mystic," 223). It is not a question of stress? In *Humay and Humayun*,¹³ for example, the mystical tinge, although present, is extraordinary unobtrusive (Burgel 352).¹⁴ It is human love that is celebrated, religious and mystical language notwithstanding: *amor deus est*.

From the viewpoint of *courtly* literature, we suggest it would be even more precise to say that *amor dea est*, love is a goddess.¹⁵ Here we must part company with those who speculate that the innovation of *fin'amors* is that the lover is in a subordinate role (Lewis 2-4). Instead of something new, may it not be a kind of return to an older, archaic tradition in which the White Goddess is the supreme deity and her son lover and victim (Graves 387-388). In both the *canso* and the *ghazal* the beloved is apotheosized.¹⁶ In this poem of Hafiz, for example, the poet alludes to the myth of the day of Pre-Eternity, when, according to tradition, man was predestined to divine love (Meisami, "Technique," 19):

In Pre-Eternity the rays of your beauty breathed (a breath of) Epiphany;
QG 152 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 19)

Stressing the inimitable beauty of his beloved, Hafiz declares:

(This) friend's beauty does not need our imperfect (or: endless) love; What need for (additional) splendor, for (additional) points¹⁷ and lines has a beautiful face? QG 3.3 (tr. Skalmowski 590)

Although there is no allusion to Pre-Eternity is the *cansos* of Bernart de Ventadorn, the troubadour nevertheless treats his *domna*¹⁸ as if she were a goddess. Huchet proposes that the Bernardian *verso* is an *eikon*, both religious and aesthetic, in which the beauty of the Lady is contemplated (Huchet 16):

car sai c'am sui amatz per la gensor qued anc Deus fei ("Lancan folhon bosc e jarric," vv. 21-22)¹⁹ because I know that I love and am loved by the most beautiful woman God has ever made.²⁰

Lady, the most beautiful ever born and the best that I have ever seen (Nichols 96).

Among the best woman God ever made, I have chosen the finest (Nichols 102)

It is evident that here we are speaking of love in absolute terms. Small wonder that the poets connect passion with the finality of death, the ironic moment of fulfillment.

Open my grave after my death and look :

Because of my eternal fire (of love) there comes smoke out of my shroud (tr. Skalmowski 586)

Bernart's flame of love is no less intense :

God, she should realize now that I am dying for her love ;

(Nichols 88).

. . . but may death overtake me if I do not love her with all my heart

(Nichols 50).

This *cri de coeur* of Bernart recalls the image of the Burnign candle in these verses of Hafiz :

By your life, O sweet-mouthed idol — like the candle.
on dark nights, my desire is self-annihilation.

(tr. Meisami, "Technique," 90)

The beloved absent, the lover consumes himself like the candle that burns itself out,²¹ like the troubadour, who when the lady is absent, is utterly consumed with desire.

And if she stayed with me a long time, I would swear by the saints that there would be no greater joy in the world. But at parting I take fire and burn

(Nichols 88).

The lack of love or unrequited love is a kind of death, as indicated by these poets. And yet, oxymoronically, love itself is also portrayed in terms of death and annihilation :

The mountain of my patience become soft as wax in the hands of your gief, since, like a candle, I have been melting in the water and fire of your love

QG 294 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 11-12).

The moment when Bernart looked into his lady's eyes was a moment of delicious death :²²

Mirror, since I saw myself reflected in you, deep sighs have been killing me (Nichols 168)

Mary Kay has reminded us of the association between mirror and death common in many cultures as demonstrated, for example, in the Narcissus legend (Kay 275).

When we speak of the mystic erotic, we are far from a fleeting moment of passion. The path of the lover is fraught with difficulties. Hafiz clearly affirms.

The road who of love is full of tumult and trial, O heart : he goes in haste along this road will stumble QG 221 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 8)

The poet advises the lover :

Though the path of love is the hiding place of those with curved bows,²³ he who proceeds wisely will overcome his enemies QG 128 (tr. Meisami,

"Technique," 8)

The way of the *fin'amans* is no less easy.

. . . . since I live as painfully as one who dies in fire (Nichols 50)

Never did God create my torment or agony which I do not suffer in peace,
save the pain of love (Nichols 143).

Keppler points out that for the sufis suffering is in effect THE condition of love (Keppler, "Magie," 31). Not to mention the Zoroastrian mystics who described their devotion in terms of willing slavery to God or passionate self sacrifice for His sake :

Canonical Zoroastrian texts speak of the ultimate of the believer as becoming *xwesvih I yazdan*, "property of the yazatas [= gods]" (Russell 72) .

Bernart describes himself as a slave to his lady. Indeed, the persona of the timid, humble lover is his "trademark" (Kendrick 179).

... I am so fearful of her. Therefore, I surrender myself, a suppliant, to her. If it pleases her, let her give me away or sell me (Nichols 116)

Sometimes the path to the lady's heart is described as a perilous journey.

Now what remedy is there ? since, in the sea of my sorrow, the skiff of my patience has fallen into a whirlpool, driven by the sail of separation.

The ship of life came near to being drowned by the waves of desire for you, in the shoreless sea of separation QG 297 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 11)

Here the ship (or skiff) is a metaphor for the poet's patience or life. In this *canso* of Bernart, the ship becomes a simile of the poet himself :

I have great hope from her. But it does me little good because she keeps me poised like a ship on a wave. I do not know how to escape from the sorrowful thought that afflicts me (Nichols 171).

Interestingly enough, Hafiz can also allude to the path of passion in terms of the desert :

The ups and downs of the desert of love is a snare of calamity : where is the lion-heart who does not fear calamity ? (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 9)

The desert image does not occur in Bernart's poetry, but the "ups and nifue downs" of love remind one of the continual deaths and rebirths the troubadour experiences.

This love wounds me in the heart gently with a sweet savor; a hundred times a day I die of sorrow and I revive with joy another hundred (Nichols 134).

The basic reason for the lover's suffering and anguish is the cruelty of the beloved.

Why more can I do if Love captures me and if no key but pity can open the prison into which he puts me, and I find no pity there ? (Nichols 134).

The more I implore her, the crueller she is to me,
(Nichols 131)

Hafiz faces similar difficulties :

It would be nice, if you learn fidelity and promise(-keeping), Because (otherwise) everyone you'll meet (lit. see) will get to know (your) cruelty (lit, tyranny) (tr. Skalmłowski 587-588).

Trying to be philosophical, the poet says to himself : Hafiez ! Don't suffer (so) because of autumn's wind on the meadow of Time (or Fate).

Consider (this) reasonable thought : 'Where is a rose without thorns ?'
(tr. Skalmowski 527)

Despite the sufferings of the lover, the poets insist that the pursuit of love (= the rose), is worthwhile :

. for the rose embodies the ideal of perfect beauty which man must strive after, and the thorn the suffering which he gladly accepts as the price we must pay for the pursuit that ideal.

The pangs of love far from invalidating man's pursuit of the rose make this pursuit an ennobling one, for it must not be forgotten that the rose is the most precious goal in life (Meisami, "Gardens," 166).

Hafiz seems to incarnate these sentiments when he says :

Gul 'aziz-ast, ghanimat shumuridash suhbat, (QG 164).

The rose is precious; count her company as gain, (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 166)

Count thou as gain the night of love and seize the gift of hapiness, for moonlight the lover's heart; the tulip-garden's verge is sweet QG 288 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 166).

It is well-known that the courtly lover claims that his sufferings are the furnace in which his mettle becomes refined and perfected. Bernart proclaims :

Man can only achieve worthiness in the love and service of ladies,

. No man is worth anything without love (Nichols 99).

Just as the love in which my heart is improved and cured is superior, . . .
(Nichols 102)

Spring is, of course, the season of love.²⁰ Hafiz's words express a *joie de vivre*:

It is spring; strive to be happy, for many a rose will flower when you are under ground. QG 456 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 167)

Not that Hafiz is an exception in comparison to his peers.

Many *ghazals* featured a brief stylized 'spring song' prelude consisting of a mere verse or two, and greatly resembling similar passages in troubadour poetry; for the courtly *ghazal*, as for the troubadours and *trouveres*, love was the only subject worthy of celebration,..... (Meisami, "Gardens," 159).

Unlike Hafiz, Bernart does not concern himself with the withering of Winter. On the other hand, the troubadour finds joy in the freshness of Spring and identifies with it.

When woods and thickets shoot forth their leaves, and the flowers and the greenery appear throughout the gardens and the meadows, [I too] rejoice and blossom, I am renewed and put forth leaves according to my nature (Nichols 108).

A form of interiorized Spring can be found in the works of both poets, but with a difference. For Hafiz, conscious only too well of the transience of things, the treasures of the garden become permanent once stored in the heart.

Lay up a treasure-store of the hues and scents of Spring, for after it will follow the highway-man of Winter QG 430 (tr. Meisami, "Gardens," 167)

As for Bernart, although Spring may have been the beginning of love, once the fire of passion has become planted in his heart, it operates independently of external circumstances.

My heart is so full of joy that everything seems changed to me : the frost seems like white, red, and yellow flowers (Nichols 171).

The nightingale appears in the poetry of both Hafiz and Bernart, but once again with a difference. For the troubadour, the nightingale's song is associated with the awakening of Nature and is an invitation to love.

When the fresh grass and leaf appear and the flower buds on the branch, and when the nightingale lifts his voice high and clear and sings his song, I rejoice in him, I rejoice in the flower, and I rejoice in myself, and even more in my lady (Nichols 154).

I have heard the shy nightingale's sweet voice, which has leapt into my heart so that it sweetens and lightens all the worry and mistreatment which love gives me (Nichols 105).

In the period when Hafiz wrote his poetry, the nightingale and the rose were conventional types of the lover²⁶ and the beloved respectively (Meisami, "Technique," 20).²⁷

The nightingale thinks only that the rose become his love; the rose thinks only of when she should be coy.

The nightingale learned its song from the rose's grace; it would not have all these songs and poems arranged in its beak. QG 277 (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 21)

These last few lines remind us of Bernart's claim that the reason his songs are so good is that he has given himself over completely to love.

And so my singing is superior because I have joy in love and devote my lips and eyes and heart and mind to it (Nichols 81).

Courtly poets, both Bernart and Hafiz draw their inspiration from love.

Not only in theme, but also in form, the *ghazal* and the *canço* share certain similarities, not the least of which is their origin in music.²⁸ Philip Hitti, for example, has suggested that the word troubadour can be traced back to the Arabic root *TRB* (= music, song) (Hitti 562). On the other hand, Alec Robertson argues in favour of the word *tropator* or composed of tropes,²⁹ optional accretions to the liturgy (Robertson 250). Whether the etymon to *tropadour* is Arabic or Latin, or perhaps a confluence of the two, the word clearly indicates a singer of songs, and there is more than adequate manuscript evidence to document that

the versos of Bernart de Ventadorn were sung (Lazar 43-48). With regard to the *ghazal*,

In early periods it is often equivalent to 'song', reflecting the lyric ties with music and its status as sung poem;³⁰ (Meisami, "Persona," 125).

Later on, one distinguished between sung or un-sung *ghazals*, i.e. , *ghazal-i malhun* and *ghazal-i mujarrad* respectively. It was also a question of contrasting rhythmical patterns: a quantitative pattern (*vazn-i 'aruzi*) for the un-sung *ghazal* and an accentual rhythm determined by the musical mode (*vazn-i iqa'li*) (Meisami, "Persona," 142-143). Another formal consideration lies in the apparent "incoherence" of both lyric forms.

Orientalist criticism of the *ghazal* has often expressed contempt for its stereotyped, conventional diction, its rhetorical complexity, and its apparent formal incoherence (Meisami, "Persona," 125).

The difficulty for the modern reader is that the *ghazal* is composed of a series of epigrammatic distichs (*bayts* or *shi'rs*) which are united by rhyme ([a a] b a , c a , etc.) and "canonical" meters (Skalmowski 16, Pritchett 199). In latter periods the normative length did not generally exceed nine or ten two-line verses (Meisami, "Persona," 125).³¹ Since each line is a complete thought (end-stopped lines), enjambement being forbidden, it may be difficult to ascertain a consistent train of thought (Meisami, "Unity," 117). Thus the *ghazal* may appear in some sense to be "atomistic" or "molecular" (Pritchett 119). Nonetheless, in her analysis of Hafiz's *ghazal*, "Hal-i dil ba tu guftanam havas ast" (Appendix A), Meisami demonstrates that there is indeed an overall structure that gives meaning. In the first 3 two-line verses, Hafiz introduces and develops the motif of love made impossible by the beloved's distance and the impossibility of declaring his love. In the last 3 two-line verses, while seeming to develop the original motif, Hafiz actually introduces the real subject, i. e., poetry itself. There is a climactic final line that makes the main theme explicit and draws a conclusion. The transition comes at midpoint, the 4th two-line verse, with the ambiguous image of "stringing the fine and backwards to love, but also forward to poetry; and it forms a priceless pearl," a frequent metaphor for composing poetry. This verse points a "turn" resembling the "turn" of the sonnet.³² The transition is between love and poetry, different but allied themes. In our study of Guilhem de Cabestanh's *Canso II*, we discovered a "turn" at midpoint of the poem's strophic structure.³³ Here the six strophes are composed of nine verses each, with the fifth central verse mediating a series of antitheses (Appendix B) : Str. I: confusion vs. understanding, Str. II complaint vs. acceptance, Str. III: complaint vs. silence , Str. VI: torment vs. consolation (Thomas. "Point" 163-168). Obviously, this is not a classical, straight-line construction, Whereas the problem with the *ghazal* is the lack of transition,³⁴ the "incoherent" composition of the *troubadour* criticized by Jeanroy and others³⁵ can be explained by the antithetical construction of their poems.³⁶ When it comes to Bernart, Mancini is not wrong in asserting that

"In gioco degli *opposita* trova la sua celebrazione piu perfetta" in Bernart de Ventadorn (Mancini 63).

When we analyzed Bernart's "Lo tems vai e ven e vire"³⁷ (appendix C), a similar series of antitheses³⁸ was uncovered, but without Guilhem's mediating verse: Str. I: no action vs. action, Str. II: action vs. reason for action, Str. III: blame vs. punishment, Str. IV: action vs. lack of action, Str. V: present vs. future (negative) action, Str. VI: future (positive action vs. reason for hope, Str. VII: positive vs. negative³⁹ (Thomas, "Artless," 275-278). There is a veritable polyphony of rivaling viewpoints (Rosenstein 357).⁴⁰ It may well be that this zig-zag internal construction is motivated, at least in part, by the poet's reactions to the implied audience. Now the singer addresses the sympathetic elements in his audience, now the hostile (Meisami, "Persona," 134; Golden 6). Once we have a better understanding of the inner workings of the *ghazal* and the *canso*, the charge of "incoherence" is transformed into respectful admiration for the poet's superlative craft.

As our study has tried to demonstrate, there is not a small number of parallels between the Occitanian *canso* and the Persian *ghazal*. Despite the external trappings of mysticism drawn from Sufism and Christianity, the real emphasis is on human love. Both the troubadour and the Persian courtier use religious language to express erotic emotions. Concentrating on the *ghazals* of Hafiz, we discovered significant similarities to the *versos* of Bernart de Ventadorn. Both poets apotheosized the beloved. Speaking of love in absolute terms, they employ death as a metaphor for love. Paradoxically, the lack of love is also described as a kind of death. The path of the lover is a difficult one because of the beloved's cruelty. Nonetheless, overcoming the obstacles results in the improvement of the lover. The season of love, Spring is absent neither in the *canso* nor in the *ghazal*. The nightingale appears in Bernart and Hafiz, but with noted differences. With regard to form, it was observed that the *canso* and the *ghazal* have their origins in music. Despite the obvious difference in form and structure, the *verso* and the *ghazal* share the same fate of being unjustly criticized for incoherence. It turned out to be a question of not properly comprehending the underlying poetic structure. There is nothing new in saying that courtly literature is not confined to Europe. However, although we are not totally convinced that "the feelings and conceptions of *amour courtois* are universally possible in any time or place or at any level of society" (Dronke 2), we do nonetheless suggest that it is eminently appropriate for Eurocentric scholars to broaden their horizons in order to better appreciate the courtly literatures of other cultures.

APPENDIX A

1. Oh vain desire ! to tell you my heart's state :
oh vain desire ! to hear of your feelings.
2. Oh vain desire ! to sleep til dawn beside you,
on such a noble and precious Night of Power.
3. Oh vain desire ! to sweep the dust from your path,
for honour's sake, with the tips of my lashes.
4. Ah, what a vain desire ! to string such a fine and priceless pearl, in the dark of night.
5. O Zephyr ! give me aid tonight;
it is my vain desire to flower at dawn.
6. See my callow hope ! desiring in vain
to hide from my rivals a tale exposed.
7. Oh vain desire ! -- to utter, like Hafiz,
in spite of all pretenders, licentious verse.
(M. Shamlu, no. 41, tr. Meisami, "Unity", 132.

APPENDIX B

Never would I have believed that I would abandon frivolous pleasure for Love or song for the joy of love nor would I have ever believed that I would weep for tenderness. *Love holds me tight in her power*⁴¹, for in the beginning she gives me many a sweet pleasure, and I believe that God made me to serve both her and her merit.

If I often complain about the one whom I praise and if I thank her when I should complain, *I do not act deceptively*. The one whom Love ennobles ought to suffer many things : for on many occasions it happens that good conquers evil, as it should be.

A lover who changes his conduct without a good reason should not complain about his sufferings or speak about his sorrow or make his troubles known or praise himself for the good that he receives. There are several who speak this way right off, but they know not the source of joy and displeasure.

I do not know enough of love to speak of it without fear; but I have seen that an excess of laughter does not accompany a great joy, *Many a sigh* has a false air about it. That is why Love directs me as she directs the best, without blame and without fault.

Lady, *willingly command* the most faithful lover who most patiently awaits your pleasure and serves his lady and her worth best of all, command him by your proclamation to do what pleases you. Nothing holds me back but fear⁴².

You torment my thoughts so much that, many a time when I pray, I see you there before me. So vivid is my memory of your fresh colour and *your graceful, perfect body* that I can remember nothing else. From this sweet thought nobility and graciousness come to me.

APPENDIX C

Time comes and goes returning through days, through months, and through monghs, and through years, and I al as know not what to say, for my longing is ever one. It is ever one and does not change, for I want and have wanted one woman, from whom I have never had joy.

Since she does not lose a chance to mock, grief and pain come to me, she has made me sit at such a game that I have the worst two to one until she makes peace. But that love is lost which is maintained by one side only.

In fact I should be the accuser of myself, since there was never born of woman who served so long in vain; and if she does not chastise me for it, I will forever double my madness toward her, for a fool does not fear until he experiences.

I will no longer be a singer or of the school of Lord Eblke, for neither my singing, my voice, nor my melodies do me any good; and no matter what many do or say, I do not know how it may profit me and see no improvement.

Although I make a show of joy, I have great sadness in my heart. Who ever saw more penance done before the sin? The more I emlore her the crueller she is to me, but if she does not improve in a short time, there will be a parting.

However, it is well that she subjects me utterly to her will, for, although she unjustly delays things, she will have pity. For so the Scriptures show: a single day of good fortune outweighs more than a hundred others.

Indeed I will not part with my life as long as I am safe and sound, just as after the kernel is gone, the straw flutters a long time. And although she has shown no haste, she will certainly not be blamed by me if only she improves by herself from nor on.

Oh good and desirable love; body well-formed, slender and smooth, fresh and fine-hued flesh which God has fashioned with his hands; I have always desired you, for no other creature pleases me. I want no other love at all.

Sweet, noble creature, may the one who has so friendly formed you give me the joy I hope for. (Nichols 130-131).

Notes and References

1. Need one stress the well-known distinction between *caritas* and *amor*. The former is intellectual, the latter instinctual. *Caritas* is used only of men, whereas *amor* is applied to both men and beasts.
2. "The Mystic Erotic: Carnal Spirituality in Old Provence and Medieval India," *Neohelicon*, XXI, I (1994), 217-246.
3. 9th - 15th centuries A. D.
4. From the perspective of medieval Arabic and Persian poetics the term *ghazal* designates poetry on the subject of love, whether it is found in a lyric wholly devoted to that subject or whether it

- is incorporated into a larger formal structure along with other generic categories. More specifically, the Persian *ghazal* from the twelfth century onward, designates a specific type of lyric which acquired distinctive format features that, combined with content-oriented generic elements, made it a lyric genre from a more Western Point of view (Meisami, "Persona," 125). The more formal aspects of the *ghazal* will be discussed later on in this study.
5. This movement was an emotionally charged devotional worship of a personal deity (Dimock 3-4).
 6. Nizami, or more properly Nizammedin abu Mahammad Ilyas ibn Yusuf, born 1141 A. D., became the creator of the Persian love story (Nizami, *Princesses*, 167-168)
 7. Allegorical exegesis (*ta'wil*) is central to Isma'ilism, which posits an exoteric and an esoteric aspect, a *zahir* and a *batin*, not only for Scripture but for the entire universe, every element of which participates in a complex sign-system (Meisami, "Design," 458). Let us note, in passing, that Persian rhetoric lacks a specific term for allegory comparable to the Western allegoria (Meisami, "Technique," 3).
 8. On the other hand, the axis shifts toward the mystical in two of Nizami's romances. In *Khrusaw and Shirin*, Farhad loves Shirin without expecting her to return his love, unlike Khrusaw who seeks physical satisfaction. The former renounces all worldly attachments and retires to the desert. Upon hearing the false news of Shirin's death, Farhad kisses the earth and dies. In *Layla and Majnun*, despite the fact that Layla is forced to marry Ibn Salam, a marriage which is never consummated, the lovers never commit adultery and are joined only a death. Transcendence is achieved by the lover through love (Southgate, "Anomaly," 47-49). At the same time, there are the poetic works of Sa'di (1213-1292), which vacillate between pornographic pieces on sodomy and mystical passion (Southgate, "Sa'di," 415).
 9. With Hafiz, a Persian court poet, the *ghazal* reaches its peak in the 14th century. His poems combine, on one hand, mastery of the genre's complex conventions, and, on the other, an innovative and personal style unparalleled in his day (Meisami, "Unity," 116).
 10. Hafiz, Divan, ed. Muhammed Qazvini and Qasim Ghani (Tehra, 1320/1941), 342. All citations from Hafiz will be from this edition, except when noted, and will be designated by QG followed by the numbering used by the editors.
 11. It is obvious that an important source of allusive metaphor in Hafiz is religion (Meisami, "Technique," 23).
 12. Some have even suggested that the Occitanian lyric is born from a sexual impasse, from the lack of sexual union (Huchet 103).
 13. A medieval Persian romance written by Khaju-i Kirmani (1281-1361), an older contemporary of Hafiz (Burgel 347).
 14. Examples of a mystical tinge would be:
 - A. Humay's journey, inspired by love, to reach Humayun is a symbol of the soul's journey to God.
 - B. The journey from Sham (Evening) to Khawar (East) is reminiscent of the mystical journey from darkness to light.
 - C. The movement from the capture of cannibals to the ascent to the throne.
 - D. Crossing the sea of fire to conquer the sorcerer's castle.
 - E. Despair and roaming in the desert followed by union with the beloved.
 - F. The motif of renunciation:
 - a. Although a prince, Humay leaves his country to seek Humayun.
 - b. Humay renounces his throne as King after a dream of Humayun urging him to come after her.
 - c. In China, thinking Humayun dead, he forswears his power toward leadership of the army.
 - d. After Humayun's death, he renounces his kingship and retreats into the desert. (Burgel 353-354).
 15. This quality of being a sort of absolute or self-sufficient entity is called in Persian *esteyna* or "Sovereignty" (Skalmowski 590).

16. When Humay first looks upon Humayun, she appears like a supernatural being and he swoons (Burgel 349).
17. Literally "mole."
18. *Domna* usually designated a mature woman of noble rank who is also, in most cases, married (Monsoon, "Lady," 259).
19. All citations of the poetry of Bernart de Ventadorn are from the edition of Moshe Lazar.
20. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. and John A. Galm et al. ed., *The Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn* (Chapel Hill, NC: Un. of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 108. All further citations will be from this edition and will be indicated in the text with the page number.
21. One remembers the King of Nizami's Story Told by the Greek Princess on Sunday in the Yellow Pavilion of the Sun. Despite the fact that Periru rejects his amorous advances because she claims that "All our women, once they have given their hearts to a man, are destined to die in childbirth" (Nizami, *Princesses*, 52), nonetheless he languishes with desire:
 "You leave my desire unfulfilled, but I find even less peace when I am separated from you . . .
 "(Nizami, *Princesses*, 53).
22. One remembers that moment in *Humay u Humayun* when the prince looks at a picture of Humayun with whom he instantly falls in love (Burgel 384). Then there is Nizami's Story Told by a Moorish Princess on Monday in the Green Pavilion of the Moon. One day, when the wind lifted the veil of a woman and he perceived her face, Bisha the Ascetic falls in love at first sight. He even goes so far as to say: "' Right or wrong — I cannot help it'" (Nizami, *Princesses*, 63). And let us not forget the Story Told by a Russian Princess on Tuesday in the Red Pavilion of Mars, which is the tale of Turandot:
 If her dream-drunk Narcissus eyes glanced at you only once, you became her prisoner for the rest of your life and free men envied you your shackles (Nizami, *Princesses*, 78).
 In addition to the importance of the eyes, Chaire Kappeler investigates the erotic resonance of the image of hair in the poetry of Hafiz (Kappeler, "Chevelure," 9ff).
23. There appears to be a complicated word-play (iham) on the word *Kamaddaran* (bowmen). It may refer to more than one thing: 1. the dangers in life that wait for the lover, 2. the beloved herself whose eyebrows are conventionally compared to curving bows which shoot arrows into the lover's heart, 3. perhaps a whole bevy of beauties to try the lover's steadfastness, or finally, 4. those who blame the lover for his conduct (Meisami, "Technique," 8).
24. Note that in the Chinese *Yu-tai hsin-yung* (*New Songs from a Jade Terrace*), an anthology of love poetry compiled in the middle of the 6th century A.D., the predominant season is autumn. This "Place Style Poetry" deals with postcoital longing, whereas most of Bernart's poems the *verso* glows with pre-coital desire. In the Lazar edition, the 49 *cansos* open with the season of Spring and only two with Autumn.
 Eliza Ghil has demonstrated that this Natureingang is neither a universal way of beginning a *canso* nor is it exclusively characteristic of the *canso* as genre (Ghil 97).
25. As Wendy Pfeffer indicates, the nightingale appears in nearly a quarter of his *cansos* (Pfeffer 210).
26. Bernart does not seem to identify with the nightingale. However, in one of his most famous *versos*, it is apparent that the troubadour desires to be like the lark in its flight toward the sun (= the lady), but her rejection frustrates him.
 Can vei la lauzeta mover de joi sas als contral rai, que s'oblid's.s laisa chazer per la doussor cal cor li vai. ai! tan grans envैया mèn ve de cui quéu veja jauzion, meravilhas ai, car desse lo cor de dezirer no'm fon. (vv. 1-8)
 When I see the lark beat his wings for joy against the sun's ray, until, for the sheer delight which goes to his heart, he forgets to fly and plummets down, then great envy of those whom I see filled with happiness comes to me. I marvel that my heart does not melt from desire (Nichols 167-168).
27. In Hafiz's metaphorical system, the nightingale unites courtly lover, poet and *rind* (Meisami, "Gardens," 252). The *rind* was one who abhorred hypocrisy by flouting convention (Meisami, "Unity," 133, n. 29).

28. One may wonder at the fact that Humay, Ramin (*of Gurgani's Wis u Ramin*), and Tristan are all musicians (Burgel 352).
 29. Matthew C. Stell has shown how Bernart's melodies are strongly associated with liturgical chant style and modal theory (Steel 246ff).
 30. One recalls the Latin *carmen*, which can mean song or poem: *carmen* < *canmen*, the root *can* - being the same as we have in *canere*, to sing.
 31. Other formal features of the *ghazal* include:
 1. the observance of a single metrical and rhyme throughout (typical of both Arabic and Persian lyric)
 2. an obligatory initial rhyming distich (*the matla'*)
 3. the incorporation of the poet's *takhallus* or pen name, in the final or penultimate line
 4. Its structure is typically paratactic. (Meisami., "Persona," 125)
- As to Bernart de Ventadorn, the structure of most of his *cançons* conform to the troubadour tradition of the twelfth century, i.e., 5 to 7 strophes of 7 to 8 verses with a *tornada* of 2 to 5 verses at the end (Lazar 28-30). Nathaniel B. Smith has observed that Bernart's lack of parallelism is compensated for by a high density of sound repetition (Smith 220).
32. For a provocative comparison of Hafiz's *ghazals* and Shakespeare's sonnets, see Woiciech Skalmowski, Hafiz and Shakespeare: An East West Encounter, "*Paperes in Honor of professor Mary Boyce* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 583-591.
 33. It has been noted that the "ship" of Bernart's *canço* "Tant ai mo cor ple de joya" is found in the middle of the poem (Str. IV) and marks a turning point between hope and despair (Monson, "Tristan," 390).
 34. A comparison with the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud seems appropriate here. One of the difficulties with understanding Symbolist poetry also lies in the lack of transition.
 35. Alfred Jeanroy, *La Poesie lyrique des Troubadours* (Paris: Didier, 1934), II, 113-114; James J. Wilhelm, *The Cruellest Month: Spring, Nature and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 155-171; Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., "Towards An Aesthetic of the Provençal *Canço*," in *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History*, eds. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 352-353.
 36. It seems that this misunderstanding is at the base of Aletti's criticism of Bernart's moral "incoherence" as opposed to Chrestien de Troyes whose characters' behaviour is more coherent (Aletti 112).
 37. This *canço* is composed of 8 strophes of 7 verses, plus a *tornada* of 3 lines.
 38. The first half of the antithesis is composed of four verses, the second half of three.
 39. The *tornada* in IX. 57-59 simply echoes the positive aspect of Str. VIII.
 40. Compare the "principle binaire" that Imre Szacics discovered in her analysis of "Can I'erba fresch e lh folha par" (Szacics 247). In her comparison of the poetry of Catullus and Bernart, Marilyn Desmond discovered a binary opposition expressing contradictory emotions (Desmond 407).
 41. All mediating verses are italicized.
 42. When it comes to Str. V, we have preferred the reading of Langfors to that of Cots because it conforms more to the overall structure of the *canço* (Thomas, "Point," 166).

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Aesthetic Studies in New China

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In the 90's of the 20th century, it is very significant for us to review the past of Chinese aesthetic research and look forward to its future. Generally speaking, after the establishment of New China, for more than 40 years, Chinese aesthetic research has passed a hard and tortuous way, but it also has gained great achievements which are specially attractive when we compare it — the younger branch of study — to other traditional subjects.

I

The development of aesthetics in New China knows mainly two phases which can be divided by the "Cultural Revolution" since the founding of the People's Republic. In the first stage (1949 - 1966) there became four schools, centred on the discussion of aesthetic thought of Mr. Zhu Guang - qian. These four schools laid their respective theoretical foundations by virtue of the different answers to the question of aesthetic essence. Mr. Lii Ying advanced the idea that beauty consists in the subjective; Cai Yi held on to his view that beauty consists in the nature or objective and that beauty is the ideal; Mr. Zhu Guang-qian put forward the statement that beauty consists in the unification of the subjective and objective after self - criticism of his idealistic point of view that beauty is the creature of the subjective soul. He thought that beauty lies in the "image of matter" which is unified by the subjective and objective, neither merely in the pure objective matter nor simply in the subjective soul. Li Ze - hou applied Marxist viewpoint of practice to the aesthetic studies, and thought beauty consists in the objectification of human essential faculty, so beauty is both social and objective. Among these four viewpoints, there is the difference between materialism and idealism and as well as between dialectics and metaphysics. They had sharp polemics and heated arguments each other and simultaneously assimilated in varying degrees as well. For instance, Mr. Zhu Guang - qian was interestingly paying attention to the important role of labour practice in aesthetic and artistic activities. The unification of subjective and objective, he said, sometimes refers to the unification of the two aspects in labour practice. So that shows his assimilation to the standpoint of practical school headed by Li Ze - hou. Li Ze-hou, however, was also getting attentive to the functions of

aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic psychology. He separated the essence of beauty and aesthetic object into two categories, and thought the former has nothing to do with the aesthetic consciousness while the latter is mediated by the subjective factors such as the aesthetic psychology and aesthetic consciousness etc. That seems to be left some vestiges, affected by Mr. Zhu Guang-qian, of high valuation of the aesthetic role of subjective. In brief, the great discussions on aesthetics during the 50's and the initial stage of the 60's are healthy and profitable with regard to its main current and laid a foundation of the aesthetic studies in New China.

Apart from the abstract and philosophical speculation of the problems of essence of beauty, the other questions such as the object of aesthetics, the relationship between the aesthetics and the artistic practice or the reality of life, the law of both balance and imbalance between the material production and artistic production etc. are dealt with. These discussions not only benefit the theoretical exploration on aesthetics, but also play an active role in the development of art and even in the socialist constructions.

II

During the decade of upheaval turbulence (refers to the "Great Cultural Revolution"), aesthetics was consigned to limbo and devastated a great deal. It was almost a forbidden area where no one dared speak of the word "beauty". Even if Yao Wen-Yuan's pragmatistic aesthetics, idealist empiricist aesthetics and the metaphysic aesthetics were rampant at that time, some comrades were still exploring the true essence of the aesthetic questions silently with inflexible will. Here comes a spring in the great and prosperous development of aesthetic studies up to the smashing of "the Gang of Four". Specially after the Third Plenary Session of the XI' th Central Committee, under the guidance and the encouragement of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought and the Party's policy of letting a hundred of flowers blossom and a hundred of schools of thought contend, people have freed themselves from old ideas. That comes to the 2nd stage of development of aesthetics in New China. This is the most important and most splendid period in New China's aesthetic studies. Here are some characteristics of it:

1. Unprecedented development and strength of the workers of aesthetic studies

People who wrote articles and joined the great discussions on aesthetics were no more than several dozens during the 50's and early in the 60's. At that time, only in Beijing University and Chinese People University were teaching and research sections of aesthetics set up and only in a few schools such as

Beijing University, Chinese People University and Shandong University, was the course of aesthetics offered. There was no professional journal of aesthetics in the whole country at that time. Anyhow, there has been much development in comparison of the conditions before Liberation. But it was far away from the demands of the socialist construction. After the smashing of "the Gang of Four" and alongside the proposal of the construction of the two civilizations, the workers in aesthetic studies have been thriving unprecedentedly. According to the tentative statistics, the teachers of aesthetics working in institutes of higher learning (colleges or universities) have been nearly to 600 or so. The courses of aesthetics are almost offered universally in every institute of higher learning. Graduate students of aesthetics (M. A. or Ph. D) have been enrolled in a lot of universities or colleges and scientific research institutions. The institutes of aesthetics have been founded in China Academy of Social Science, Shanghai Academy of Social Science, Shandong University and Chinese People University etc. The research work on aesthetic theories has been vigorously unfolding in these units. Books and journals of aesthetics are emerging one after another, e. g. *Aesthetic* by Research Section of Aesthetics, Institute of Philosophy, China Academy of Social Science; *Collected Essays on Aesthetics* by Research Section of the Theory of Art and Literature, Institute of Literature, China Academy of Social Science; *Aesthetic Education* in Hunan Province etc. The collected aesthetic works of Zhu Guang - qian, Li Ze - Hou, Cai Yi, Lii - Ying etc. have been published by Shanghai New Literature and Art Press; *The Outline of Aesthetics* by Wang Chao - wen was published by the People's Press. There are still a lot of comrades whose works of aesthetics have been published, e. g. Zhou Lai - xiang's *The Treatises on Aesthetic Problems, On What Beauty is Harmony*, Gao Er - tai's *Beauty is the Symbol of Freedom*, Yang Xin and Gan Lin's *The Fundamentals of Aesthetics* etc. Along with the unprecedented development of the workers of aesthetic studies, Chinas National Society for Aesthetics, which has held four sessions of annual meetings, was founded in Kunming in May, 1980. The Societies for aesthetics have been founded in most provinces and cities throughout the whole country. Their aesthetic studies have been developed in depth and this popularization of aesthetics has been made wide spread, especially the Youth are more interested in aesthetics. They have founded their own aesthetic associations and they are being the main strength of aesthetic activities. Unexaggeratedly speaking, a fad of aesthetics has been engulfing in China and an upsurge of the aesthetics has reached in New China.

2. Deepening of Aesthetic Theory

One of the great achievements on aesthetic studies was displayed on the deepening of studies on the questions of fundamental theory of aesthetics in

the past ten years. These fundamental questions of aesthetic theory deal mainly with the object of aesthetic studies, the essence of beauty and the characteristics of aesthetic consciousness.

So far as the object of aesthetic studies is concerned, there became three schools of opinions before the "Cultural Revolution" : One of them thought that the aesthetics is a science which deals with beauty and the law of beauty, the other one thought that aesthetics is a science which deals with the essence, characteristics and the general law of the art, so aesthetics is a study of art. The third one thought that aesthetics is a science which deals with the aesthetic connexions, concentrated by the dialectical unification of beauty, aesthetic consciousness and art; and artistic study is the key link. After the "Cultural Revolution", the deepening of the studies of the object of aesthetics represents on the following aspects :

(1) Some researchers advocated a new point of view that aesthetics is concentrated on the experience of the sense of beauty which leads to a combination with beauty and art. He has the opinion that aesthetics should consist of philosophy of beauty, aesthetic psychology and the artistic sociology.

(2) The theory of aesthetic connexions has been deepened to some extent. This school has made a historical study to the object of aesthetics in the relations and distinctions with the cognitive connexions and the ethical or practical connections. They do not think that the object of aesthetics is fixed or static, but of history and of development. Classical aesthetics is inclined to philosophy of beauty which is partial to the objective studies, the modern aesthetics is the aesthetic psychology and artistic sociology which is inclined to the subject. The former is dealt with the individual subject while the latter, the social subject; the contemporary aesthetics of Marxism should take aesthetic connexions as the key link so as to highly synthesize dialectically the studies of subject and object, the studies of beauty, aesthetic consciousness and art, the studies of philosophy, psychology, ethics and sociology.

As for the question of the essence of beauty, there came four schools of opinions, namely the theory of subjective, the theory of nature, the theory of unification of subjective and objective and the theory of unification of subjective and objective before the "Cultural Revolution". This question has a remarkable development in recent years. First of all, around the philosophic elemental questions of the school of practical aesthetics, a further exploration and discussion has been held. Secondly, the school of practical aesthetics has made considerable progress in the discussions. The theory that beauty is "the form of freedom" gives a further elaboration of the idea that beauty is the objectification of the human faculties. They thought that the so called "humanization of nature", essentially speaking, is the human characteristics of the freedom and self-consciousness which are objectified in the object; and that becomes the human

possession of the object. They are two aspects of the same thing. Both of them can be put into a nutshell of the "freedom". It is only on the basis of this condition that the form of freedom, i.e. the beauty comes into being, that the world of nature becomes the works and reality of the human and that the human being can realize and offer their eyes upon themselves; therefore they can have the merry sense of the form of freedom. Finally, on the basis of the idea of practice, the theory of beauty as harmony is advocated by Professor Zhou Lai - xiang. There are two characteristics in the theory of harmony, one is that they think beauty neither consists simply in the object, nor simply in the subject, but in the aesthetic connexions which take shape in each other's corresponding of the aesthetic object and aesthetic subject. In other words, beauty is the objectified properties, determined by the aesthetic connexions. This kind of theory assimilates the reasonable elements among the four schools above, and yet different from them, with regard to its distinctions with the idea that beauty consists simply in the objectivity. It is different from the theory that beauty consists in the nature or in the society. Concerning its distinctions with the idea that beauty consists purely in the subject, it is also different from the theory of subjective consciousness of the beauty. As for its being the aesthetic connexions that is the objective reality independent of men's will, formed between the aesthetic object and aesthetic subject it is not alike to the theory of unity (which consists in the subject) between the subject and object. The other one is that they do not think the aesthetic connexion can be confused with the cognitive connexion and the practical connexion. Those three kinds of connexions between man and his objects are of free relationship. But the cognitive and ethical practical connexions, however, are all interfered with the object itself while the object in aesthetic connexions is essentially man himself (the objectification of the man through the labouring practice); and the relationship between man and himself (is mainly not the relationship between man and his object), in this kind of connexion is both of harmony and freedom.

About the studies of aesthetic sense and aesthetic consciousness, somebody had a deepening analysis of the contradictory duality in the aesthetic sense before the "Cultural Revolution". At the present, psychological aesthetics has a greater development. The achievements of psychology have been used for the meticulous analysis of the problems on aesthetic sense. Some one probes into the psychological characteristics of aesthetic sense in the analysis of the four elements of psychology or cognition such as sense perception (idea), understanding, feeling and imagination, and has a concrete exploration and study of variety of the types of aesthetic sense in the combinative connexions of these four elements with different proportion and construction. The study on this aspect will be making more and more conspicuous achievements along with the increasing development of psychology.

3. The opening-up and expanding of the realm of aesthetic studies

The achievements of aesthetic studies are not only displayed on deepening of the original questions but also on the opening-up and expanding the realm of the aesthetic studies. The gratifying achievements have been made in the new realms of studies such as aesthetics of literature and art, aesthetics of artistic branches, the Chinese classical aesthetics and the comparative aesthetics etc.

As for the aesthetics of literature and art, people were made intensively and extensively interested in it with the comparison of the abstract speculative philosophy of beauty. The aesthetics of literature and art is approaching and defining its object and range of study on one hand, and is making a concentrative approach in the question of the distinctive essence of the art only for art's sake on the other. In the past, the studies of the artistic essence are mainly the studies of sociology and epistemology. By virtue of the latter, it should come to the conclusion that art is a kind of form which has the reflection and the cognition of the reality through the vivid description of the figures. At present, in the aesthetic realm of literature and art, a further exploration on the aesthetic essence is being made on the basis of the research mentioned above. Someone thinks that art is intermediated by the feeling, but mainly is not the cognition. Someone advocates that art conveys ideas by virtue of the feelings but not the images. Someone thinks that art is the cognition but not only the cognition, and the feeling but not merely the feeling. They think that art is the unity of feeling and cognition, unity of psychological form and cognitive content, an immediate unity between the perceptual and the rational, the finality and the infinity, the necessity and the freedom. So it is the third kingdom of the aesthetic freedom which is bound between the rational cognition and the ethical practice. The aesthetics of every artistic branch is also flourishing along with the deepening of the studies on aesthetics of literature and art. At present, the studies of the unique essence and distinct law of the artistic branches such as theatre, calligraphy, free sketch, classical horticulture and architecture, music and film etc, become more exact and subtle in comparison with that in the past.

About the studies of Chinese classical aesthetics, people are getting more and more attracted to pay attention to it along with the advocacy of setting up a Marxist system of aesthetics with Chinese characteristics and, along with, the western countries' interests in it is getting more and more enhanced. Chinese classical aesthetics is a great treasure house while we didnot approach it from the aesthetic angle basically before the " Cultural Revolution". Although the fundamentals on this aspect were very vulnerable, considerable achievements have been made yet. The creativeness and achievements in the studies of Chinese classical aesthetics are sufficient to bring one's attention if compare it to the other traditionals, and strong branches of Chinese classical cultural studies. The studies on Chinese classical aesthetics are setting off on the following three aspects :

1. The collection and systematization of the aesthetic materials.
2. The macrocosmic studies and the reviews on the historic development of Chinese classical aesthetics. Li Ze-hou's *A History of Beauty* and his *A History of Chinese Aesthetics* (Volumes 1 and 2), co-edited in chief with Comrade Liu Gang - ji; Zhou Lai - xiang's *On Chinese Classical Aesthetics, The Main Trends of Chinese Aesthetics*, Min Ze's *A History of Chinese Aesthetic Thoughts*, Ye Lang's *An Outline History of Chinese Aesthetics* have been published. At present, the discussions have been made about the quality, characteristics, the general law and the specific law of the development of Chinese classical aesthetics and about the historical divisions of its development etc. With the comparison of the western aesthetics, Zhou Lai-xiang pointed out that Chinese classical aesthetics is partial to expression, expanding specially the theories about poetic atmosphere and lingering charm whereas the western aesthetics is partial to reproduction, correspondingly contributing to the theories of images and artistic ideals. Chinese classical aesthetics is the combination of ethics and psychology which emphasizes the integration of the good with the beautiful while in the West, aesthetics is the philosophic epistemology which places the stress on the integration of the true with the beautiful. As far as theoretical form is concerned, Chinese classical aesthetics is more intuitive and empirical and the spirit of rationalism was deeply latent in the perceptual form while the western aesthetics is more analytical and systematic. However, the aesthetic law which is elaborated in its dissecting way is not as vivid, exact or splendid as the aesthetic law caught in intuition and "sudden realization" (a category in Chan) in Chinese classical aesthetics with regard to some aspects. The distinctive exploration of Chinese classical aesthetics is spreading out in every aspect. In these studies, Chinese classical culture may be led to re-exploration, rerecognition and recommentary. Its vistas are beyond estimation.
3. The microcosmic studies of the aestheticians and their works of Chinese classical aesthetics. At present, the studies of Confucius, Mencius, Lao-Zhuang Gongsun Nizi ("Yue Ji" i. e. *Notes on Music*), Liu Xie, Li Yu, Wang Guo - wei, Lu Xun (earlier period) are carrying out deeply. The macrocosmic study and the microcosmic study are helping each other forward.

About the studies of western aesthetics and the comparative studies of aesthetics, Mr. Zhu Guang - qian's *A History of Western Aesthetics* two columns was published before the "Cultural Revolution". After the smashing of "the Gang of Four", the studies of the western aesthetics also have a new development. Comrade Ru Xin's *Collections on History of Western Aesthetics* and its sequel,

Comrade Jiang kong-yang's *Classical German Aesthetics* are all the results of new achievements of these studies. Generally speaking, Chinese aestheticians only studied the western aesthetics which was before Kant and Hegel. But along with the deep development of reforming and opening, especially since 1985, western contemporary aesthetic works have been translated into Chinese and introduced to China in large number. The first is Schopenhauer's, Nietzsche's and Sartre's philosophy and aesthetics, then, nearly every aesthetic school of the West in the 20th century has been recommended to Chinese readers, such as Susanne. K. Langer's *Feeling and Form*, Clive Bell's *Art*, Robin George Collingwood's *The Principles of Art*, Thomas Munro's *Toward Science in Aesthetics*, Rudolf Arnheim's *Art and Visual Perception* etc. Besides, collected essays on New Criticism, Structuralism, Semiotics, Hermeneutics, Reception - Aesthetics, Analytical Aesthetics and Phenomenological Aesthetics have been published too. For this importation of the aesthetic works, on one hand, it has widened Chinese aesthetes' horizons, has expanded the realm of study and enlightened Chinese aesthetes' thinking. But on the other hand, these aesthetic works have not been studied deeply, systematically and critically. They need to be further studied for lack of the combination with Chinese traditional aesthetic spirits and the current practice.

It is worth mentioning that the comparative studies which reveal the common laws of the aesthetic activities and the distinctive characteristics of nationalities between the East and the West by virtue of the comparison of the art and aesthetics between the East and the West are in the offing. At present, the comparative studies are carrying out variously. These are general comparison of the art and aesthetics between the East and the West, and the comparison of some artistic types (i.e. the comparison between Chinese opera and western drama, between traditional Chinese painting and western painting and the comparison of the idea of tragedy between the East and the West etc), the comparison between the aesthetes (i. e. the comparison between Confucius and Plato or Aristotle) as well. Comparison is a proficient method to cognize the matter. Through comparison, the general laws of aesthetic activities and the particular laws of Chinese classical aesthetics seem clearer and more distinctive.

III

In the huge tide of reforming and opening in the 80's, the second aesthetic spring of New China has come. But along with the new aesthetic activities and culture, the changes of new aesthetic tastes and concepts, also with the large importing of western modernist aesthetics, new problems have come, such as :

1. First of all, the contradiction is getting more and more obvious that the old aesthetic theory is unfit for the new aesthetic culture and practice. It

is difficult to use the aesthetic categories or the artistic concepts now available such as beauty, ugliness, sublimity, comicality, tragedy, comedy or realism, romanticism, modernism and post - modernism to exactly explain the new and developing artistic creation and aesthetic culture. Some persons think what they themselves imitated is western modernism, but we find that their creation is much different from the ugly arts of western modernism because they still obey some aesthetic laws. Some persons flaunt realism and think it is the main stream of Chinese contemporary (i. e. after 1919) and current literature and arts, but they have already gone beyond realistic law—— objective, perceptual, necessary and cognizant. Instead of that, in their creation, there are more romantic spirits and expressive consciousness, eg. subjectivity rationality, freedom and emotion. Even in disco and break dance we imported from the West, the rapid rhythm, the strong dynamics and the terroristic countenance have been greatly weakened, while the Chinese harmonious, tender feelings and gracefulness have been added into them. At present, the striking contradiction and main problem is that the original aesthetic categories and concepts do not fit the new aesthetic phenomena —— theory is behind the reality. Facing this problem, some persons are doing active exploration, but for some other persons, although on one hand, they are unsatisfied with the original theoretical pattern, on the other hand, they are perplexed and are at a loss what to do. They cannot comprehend and explain the complex aesthetic reality.

2. Along with the importing of western modernistic aesthetics, some young people blindly worship and imitate western modernism. They ignore the great difference between China and the West in history and culture, blindly recommend western aesthetics and arts to China without any analysis or differentiation. They import whatever theory as soon as it rises in the West. So, in a short period, every western aesthetic school was shown in China, but they had shorter lives. If a school in the West could keep in the limelight for 3 or 5 years, it could probably only exist for 3 or 5 months in China. On the other hand, there is also a minority of people who basically keep a negative attitude, they think the value of western modernistic aesthetics and art is not high.
3. Being related to the blind worship of western modernism, there is a small number of people who incline to negate the tradition of ancient aesthetic culture. Their viewpoint is that to negate the old traditional culture is a prerequisite to the establishment of new aesthetic concepts and culture. They consider that the traditional aesthetic culture is feudal, conservative and negative; it is basically opposite to the socialist aesthetic culture and has lost its active meaning. They think "the May 4th Movement " (1919)

was a good beginning to fight against the feudal aesthetic culture but was not complete, so, it is necessary to continue the fight to the end. This kind of nihilistic attitude of completely negating the accient aesthetic culture without any analysis is also an undeniable question. But on the other hand, some persons give the ancient aesthetic culture too high evaluation. These people are short of developing historical foresight ; sometimes, they even think the present new creation has been existing since the ancient times. So, they have gone to another extreme.

The problems mentioned above are the main questions in the present Chinese aestheticians' field. How to solve them ? Chinese aesthetes are doing serious consideration and deepgoing research. It is just like the Eight Immortals crossing the sea, each one showing his or her special prowess. Every aesthetician is trying to find a way out. Here, I'd like to offer some of my considerations to my colleagues all over the world for reference. For 40 years, I have researched aesthetic theory, aesthetics of literature and arts, Chinese aesthetics and comparative aesthetics between China and the West. My main purposes are: with the aid of researching the history of aesthetics, to comprehend the present situation of aesthetics and forecast its future ; to advance some aesthetic categories and theoretical construction which either conform to Chinese distinctive features or reflect the spirits of the times ; to solve the contradiction that the original aesthetic conventions are unfit for the new aesthetic practice of the times. Here are my main points :

- (1) In order to solve the problems above, I think first of all, we should research the renewal of the mode and methods of the subject' s thinking. If we do not build the modern scientific mode of thinking, nor grasp the most scientific methods of research, it is difficult for us to research new problems, to sum up the new experience and to produce the aesthetic concepts and construction with modern level. I advocate to use the method of dialectic thinking; furthermore, absorb some new methods of modern natural sciences such as: systems theory, information theory, cybernetics cooperation theory, dissipation structure theory and fuzzy mathematics etc. These methods are of quite universal significance. They have deeply enlightened and advanced the thought of human being. Once when Karl Marx talked about how to judge whether a branch of science was ripe or not, he said that it only depends on if it took advantage of mathematics. It is said that in " New American Encyclopedia ", Marx wrote the entry of aesthetics, in which, he raised to use the method of mathematics to research the law of artistic forms. This had keen insight. Contemporary mathematics has developed from constant mathematics, variable mathematics to fuzzy

mathematics. It is an urgent task to take advantage of mathematic achievement in aesthetic research so that aesthetics will be a ripe branch of science. Besides that, some methods of western modernist and post-modernist aesthetics should be differentially assimilated. There are some rationalities in the methods of psychology, structuralism and analytic philosophy. We should base those methods on the dialectic thinking and assimilate all these methods to form a highly synthetical method. So long as we did this, we could research aesthetic phenomena in many angles, gradations, branches of science, and all directions. We could solve all the problems comprehensively and seek truth from facts.

- (2) I advocate to smash and reform the old aesthetic categories according to the aesthetic practice of the new times, and to form new aesthetic concepts and theoretical construction. I separate the aesthetic categories now available into two big historical categories which are the harmonious beauty of ancient times and the opposite sublimity of modern times. Corresponding to the ancient harmonious beauty, classical arts consisted of exquisiteness and magnificence which were formed by the simple combination of undivided beauty, ugliness, sublimity and comicality. As for ugliness, it was not an independent category in ancient times. In ancient times, only forms were allowed to be ugly, just like Aristotle's "unharmful ugliness". Essential ugliness was excluded then. The principle to deal with ugliness then was turning it into beauty. Only in modern times, along with the revolution and rising of ugliness, beauty, sublimity, tragedy, comedy began to divide into independent, opposite categories. Realism and romanticism correspond to sublimity. Modernism corresponds to ugliness. In postmodernism, ugliness changes into absurdity. This process of developing and changing of western aesthetic concepts are simple, pure and clear. But in the reforming and opening contemporary China, the condition is much more complex. From the 80's to the initial stage of the 90's, first, traditional classical beauty still exists. Secondly, modern western aesthetic concepts and artistic culture of sublimity, ugliness and absurdity etc, are imported in a great quantity. Thirdly, the ideal of dialectic harmonious beauty which reflects the spirits of the day is forming and developing. These three patterns of aesthetics oppose, exclude and conflict each other and infiltrate, absorb and accelerate each other as well. This forms a very complicated and plural situation. In this case, unlike the West where many aesthetic phenomena are simple and pure, now in China, many aesthetic elements are mingled with each other, even the different elements of ancient, modern and present times. So, today's realism is not the original, and some modernist arts which are advertised by some artists

themselves are not the original either. This analysis of mine to the speciality of Chinese contemporary aesthetic culture, has given the complicated contradiction in aesthetic practice a theoretical explanation. In the situation of emergence of many elements, I have another point that the dialectic harmonious beauty is probably the aesthetic ideal of contemporary and future times. I hold that the new type of beauty absorbs both the ancient harmony and the opposition of modern sublimity and ugliness. It synthesizes the harmony and opposition in a higher degree. So, it is different from the ancient beauty and the modern sublimity. This phenomenon has been demonstrated in arts. e.g. the elements of subject, emotion, reason and freedom have increased in realistic art. The present new- experiential novels demand both photographic reality and abstract expression, and vice versa, some modernistic writings absorb Eastern, Chinese harmonious principles and graceful sentiments. They expect a higher degree of synthesis in the extreme opposition and division. This is probably the emergence of the new ideal of harmonious beauty in arts. The two aspects above influence each other and develop simultaneously. I also consider that the dialectic harmonious beauty needs an arduous process to ripen and get the dominant position as an aesthetic ideal and a new type of beauty. In this rather long transitional period, kinds of aesthetic types will exclude and assimilate each other. We need a long exploration and creation. It should be judged by history whether my theory and method for solving the problems fit the practice of Chinese modern and contemporary aesthetic developing or not.

- (3) To create and raise new aesthetic categories and theories, on one hand, we need to deeply research the aesthetic culture and practice of the reality. On the other hand, we need to expand the excellent Chinese tradition of aesthetic culture and use modern and contemporary western aesthetic experience or artistic culture for reference. In approaching Chinese traditional aesthetic culture, we should not look it as perfect quintessence or nihility. Ancient Chinese aesthetics once was one of the two heights of slavery world classical aesthetics society. Ancient Greek aesthetics was the first height in the world aesthetic history. The foundation of western aesthetic thoughts was laid on the aesthetic thoughts of Plato, Aristotle and Horatius. This formed the tradition of western culture and the system of western aesthetic thoughts which were of long standing and well established. As the representative aesthetics in feudal times, Chinese classical aesthetics was the second height in the world aesthetic history. It was longer in history and richer, more complicated in theories. The foundation of eastern aesthetic thoughts was laid on the aesthetic thoughts

of the "Book of Changes", Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Gongsun Nizi ("Yue Ji" i.e. "Notes on Music"), Liu Xie, Sikong - Tu, Yan Yu, Su Jin Sheng - tan, Wang Guo - wei, etc. This formed the unique system of the eastern culture and aesthetic thoughts. It is a peculiar and splendid treasure-house of aesthetics. In the past, many people researched and explained it by using the western aesthetic system which laid particular stress on reproduction and imitation, or by using the modern realistic categories and concepts. It makes me feel that it is irrelevant to the subject and unfair in praise or depreciation. The praise to Chinese classical aesthetics according to western modern concepts makes me feel like it is stretching the meaning, while the depreciation usually belittles the cream and originality of Chinese classical aesthetics. At present, people have realized that China and the West belong to two different types of culture and two different systems of aesthetic thought. Their respective characteristics and original contribution should be correctly realized. We should not use one type to play down the other or vice versa. Along with this awakening of thought, the originalities and true features of Chinese aesthetics have been paid more attention in aesthetic field. This is an important change and development. My works *On Chinese Classical Aesthetics* and *The Main Trends of Chinese Aesthetics* are parts of the incarnation of this new change. We must admit that western aesthetic thought and culture, especially the modern aesthetics and arts are more important and significant to our nationality whose modern society did not develop full well. Here I do neither mean blind worship nor total exclusion. We need analyses and differentiation. Every harmful element should be rejected and sublated, every beneficial element should be absorbed and used for reference. In short, we should base ourselves upon Chinese reality, use western aesthetics for reference, and blend the aesthetic thoughts of China and the West to a higher degree. Only depending on this, can we establish Chinese new aesthetics and aesthetic culture.

The above is my individual opinion, if inappropriate, please oblige me with your valuable comments.

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Unconstrained Favor and the Post-Metaphysical Sublime

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Heidegger stresses that aesthetics, the offspring of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity, turns the work of art into an object of private experience. Precisely because art has now moved into the horizon of aesthetics thus circumscribed, it is destined to a decline in its essence. Yet Heidegger himself suggests that one aesthetics escapes such a characterization: Kant's in the *Critique of Judgement*. When Kant characterizes the attitude by which we receive the beautiful thing as a favor, (*Gunst*), in a sense he causes the collapse of the modern correlation of subject and object, because, such a favor stands beyond any possible conceptualization, purposefulness, or subjective complacency, and is rather the pure openness to the unconcealed as such. What state of affairs reveals itself here, when Heidegger informs us that, had Nietzsche inquired of Kant himself, Nietzsche would have "had to recognize that Kant alone grasped the essence of what Nietzsche in his own way wanted to comprehend" regarding art? Or that Schiller alone grasped the essentials of Kant's doctrine of the beautiful? That Kant's insight "make it possible for a comportment toward the beautiful to be all the more pure and more intimate"?¹ The hypothesis I put to the test here can be simply formulated as follows: that Heidegger curiously fails to pursue these threads, that he neglects Kant's third *Critique* and follows Hegel's aesthetics instead: and had Heidegger inquired of Kant himself (in the third *Critique*) he would have perhaps recognized what *he* in *his* own way wanted to comprehend. When Kant calls upon the word favor to capture the specificity of the properly aesthetic freedom, favoring the free manifestation of what it welcomes, aesthetic freedom lets the phenomenon be within itself, for its own sake, without subjecting it to our concepts or desires. The fact that Kant grants an ultimate status to freedom suggests to us that, deeper than the correlation of subject and object, freedom consists in being open to the very unconcealing of the world, an unconcealing that precedes and exceeds the theoretical and practical powers of the ego, prefiguring Heidegger's own treatment of the artwork in terms of some post-metaphysical sublime.

Kant's Aesthetics

Both Schelling and Hegel were convinced of the importance of Kant's reflections on aesthetics. Hegel even wrote that "Kant spoke the first rational words on aesthetics." Others of course have claimed that in this aesthetics Kant owes nearly everything to English writers; he merely systematized the main ideas which had been developed in England and Scotland during the first quarters of the 18th century. It is now generally accepted that Kant did indeed make a careful study of English (and German) works on aesthetics and that he did indeed borrow many ideas developed in these works. Yet Kant gave a systematic framework which was totally original on his part and which gave them a significance and meaning which they had never had before.

Kant did not turn to a critical reflection upon our judgements of taste before he had first completed his *Critique of Pure Reason*, his *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the greater part of his *metaphysica specialis*, namely the metaphysics of morals and the metaphysics of the principles of the natural sciences. In the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* (1790). Kant tried to explain why the methods of earlier writers on taste seemed to be unsatisfactory. He criticized the rationalist approach of Baumgarten on the ground that Baumgarten conceived of taste as a form of confused knowledge of perfection; in Kant's own opinion this approach to aesthetic phenomena had nothing to do with the basic concern of aesthetics, because confused knowledge is not intrinsically related to pleasing forms, whereas perfection too, is as such not necessarily related to what is beautiful; that a thing is beautiful either. On the other hand, the empirical approaches of Burke, Kames, and Addison equally fail in that they cannot account for the typical universality and "necessity" of our judgements of taste. Judgements of taste are aesthetic judgements of reflection which, as such, do not say how people actually do, not with what they should do, because the latter necessarily implies some principle *a priori*.

In his introduction to his *Critique of Judgment* Kant mentioned the fact that in his philosophy as a whole there is a need for some principle of connection, at least on the part of the human mind, between the world of natural necessity and the world of freedom. The gulf between the domain of the concept of nature and that the concept of freedom cannot be bridged by the theoretical use of reason. Thus there are indeed two separate worlds of which the one can have no influence on the other. Yet the world must have an influence on the world of nature, if the principles of practical reason are to be materialized in action. Thus it must be possible to think nature in such a way that it is compatible with the possibility of the attainment in nature of ends in accordance with the principal laws of

freedom. Kant sees the connecting link between theoretical and practical philosophy in a critique of judgement which is a means to unite in one whole the two parts of his philosophy.

Kant was the first to propose that in the general economy of the faculties and of the activities of the human mind, manifesting themselves, generally speaking, in a capacity for cognition on the one hand and for desire on the other, there is room for a capacity and activity irreducible to either knowings or desiring: that is the aesthetic attitude, or in Kant's words, the faculty of judging aesthetically. This faculty is exercised by each of us when in front of the thing of nature or the products of art, we stand to acknowledge their beauty, to hail them as beautiful.

The specific and irreducible traits of this attitude are brought forth in the *Critique of Judgement*. The word "critique" found in the title obviously has no negative connotation. It simply means an examination aiming at discerning the specificity of something. But from the outset perhaps we are entitled to deem it significant and meaningful that Kant inscribes his inquiry within the framework of an examination of the faculty of judgements. In what sense is this significant? The reason is that art, considered by Kant, falls within the competence of the activity of one individual who raised himself to be its judge. This means that the products of art fall under the rightful jurisdiction of a self, an ego, an individual who appreciates them and turns them into a matter for his own judgement. This approach, referring artworks to a subject who judges them, presupposes undoubtedly the emergence of the ego and its self-positing as the absolutely privileged point of reference.

For Kant, genius, is "a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given."² The productions of genius have this as their characterizing mark: that no amount of learning, acquired skill, or imitative talent can possibly suffice for their creation. Aesthetic perception is therefore distinguished from theoretical understandings - from the kind of knowledge that mainly preoccupied Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* - by its not conforming to the cardinal rule that every intuition be brought under an adequate or corresponding concept. It is precisely this incommensurable nature of artistic genius that sets it apart from science, theory, and the labors of enlightened (epistemological) critique. Thus 'the concept of beautiful' in art does not permit the judgements upon the beauty of a product to be derived from any rule which has a concept as its determining ground, and therefore has as its basis a concept of the way in which the product is possible."³ This is why Kant rejects any form of phenomenalist aesthetics that would treat art as possessing the power to reconcile concepts with sensuous intuitions. Such thinking fails to register what is distinctive in the nature of aesthetic experience: namely, the capacity of genius to create new forms, ideas, and images that exceed all the bounds of theoretical (or rule-governed)

understanding. The author of such works "does not himself know how he has come by his Ideas," and certainly lacks the kind of knowledge that would allow him to "devise the like at pleasure or in accordance with a plan."⁴ Whence the basic difference between art and all other forms of cognitive activity: that in art there is no question of intellectual progress, of collective advance through a shared application of the truths discovered by previous thinkers.

His great model here is Newton, a figure whose intellect indeed took his voyaging into strange seas of thought, but whose findings, once established, opened up the trade routed of received, communal knowledge. Such scientific truth-claims are warranted precisely by their power of bringing intuitions under concepts, or showing that determine rules can be given for the understanding of natural phenomena. Thus "Newton could make all his steps, from the first elements of geometry to his own great and profound discoveries, intuitively plain and definite as regards their consequence, not only to himself but to everyone else."⁵ But this is not the case with those whose genius lies in the production of beautiful artworks. Theirs is a strictly incommunicable gift which cannot be taught, reduced, to precepts, or in any way handed on. Such genius produces individual creation for which the mold is broken with each new endeavor and allows of no progressive buildings on previous achievements. Or more exactly, if artists can indeed learn from their great precursors, the lesson is more by way of general inspiration than anything pertaining to form, style, or technique. For genius, according to Kant, is "imparted to every artist immediately by the end hand of nature; and so it dies with him, untill nature endows another in the same way, so that he only needs an example in order to put in operation in a similar fashion the talent of which is conscious." So art exists at the furthest possible remove from that spirit of enlightened, cooperative enterprise that for Kant belongs to both science and philosophy in its aspect of rational critique. Art may be said to "stand still" in the sense that its productions exhibit no signs of advancing toward an enlightened consensus on the "rules" of judgement or taste.

That is why Kant rejects the idea that beauty resides in the object of aesthetic contemplation. If this were the case, then there could be no clear distinction between theoretical knowledge (that which applies concepts to the realm of sensible intuitions) and aesthetic understandings (that which allows us a privileged grasp of our own appreciative faculties at work). Kant is very firm about this need to resist any form of phenomenalist reduction. Aesthetic judgements contributed nothing to our knowledge of the objects that solicit its regard. Of course those objects must possess certain attributes, qualities that mark them out in the first place as capable of arousing such response. Otherwise art would be an empty concept and aesthetics would lack any claim to exist as a self-respecting discipline of thought. But we are equally mistaken, on Kant's

view, if we assimilate whatever is distinctive in the act of aesthetic judgement to those properties supposedly inherent in the object itself. For beauty is not determined by any concepts (or rules) that would find adequate exemplification in the features - or objective characteristics -- of this or that artwork. It should rather be sought in the manner of our responding to such features, or the way that our various faculties are engaged in the act of aesthetic understandings. And this is where the experience of art differs essentially from other forms of cognitive experience. "In order to decide whether anything is beautiful or not, we refer the representation, not by the Understanding to the object for cognition but, by the Imagination (perhaps in conjunction with the Understanding) to the Subject, and its feeling of pleasure or pain.⁷ Such is the inward or transcendental turn in Kantian aesthetics, the movement away from all forms of phenomenalist reduction. In the act of responding sympathetically to a beautiful object, the mind is thrown back (so to speak) upon its own resources, required to seek a sense of purposive relationship or harmony not between sensuous intuitions and concepts of the pure understanding (as in all forms of theoretical knowledge), but rather between those various faculties whose interplays thus define the nature of aesthetic experience. "The judgement of taste is therefore not a judgement of cognition, and is consequently not logical but aesthetical, by which we understand that whose ground can be no other than subjective."⁸

Of course Kant's point is not that this "subjective" character of aesthetic judgement amounts to a species of relativism in matters of taste. To pronounce a work beautiful is always to claim a validity for one's judgement that cannot be compared with the expression of mere personal preference in this or that regard. Thus one must be content to differ with others on the questions of what makes a good wine, for such opinions are specific to the judging individual and can lay no claim to universal validity. It would be folly according to Kant, to reprove as incorrect another's sentiments in the hope of persuading them to see reason and admit one's own superior tastes. But the principle "*de gustibus, non est disputandum*" cannot apply to the realm of aesthetic judgement, any more than with issues of ethical reason. Here it is a question of requiring assent to one's evaluative statements, or putting them forward as considered judgements with a claim to universal validity. So the reflective individual learns to distinguish between matters of idiosyncratic tastes and matters of absolute or principled judgement. "Many things may have for him charm and pleasantness; no one troubles himself at that; but if he gives out anything as beautiful, he supposes in other the same satisfaction - he judges not merely for himself. but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as it it were a property of things."⁹ So the argument goes by way of analogy, deriving the universal character of aesthetic judgements for our need to treat them as they related to qualities somehow objectively present in the work or natural phenomena. But what is really at

issue in such judgements is the utterer's fitness to pronounce them with authority owing to his possession of the requisite taste or appreciative powers. And this means that there is after all a realm of properly subjective judgements whose nature is nonetheless universal or prescriptive in so far as they effectively demand our assent and brook no denial on grounds of mere personal taste.

Kant attaches the highest importance to this legislative aspect of aesthetic judgement. Thus it cannot be a matter, as Hume argued, of the social interest that there are best served by our reaching some measure of agreement on questions of good taste and beauty. For his could be no more than an empirical fact about our present social arrangement, and for a source of value only as related to our short-term motives and interests. To see the limits of such thinking, Kant argues, "we have only to look to what have a reference, although only indirectly, to the judgement of taste *a priori*."10 For even if reflection does find traces of self-interest or social motivation, still we are compelled by the very nature of such judgements to accord them a validity beyond anything accountable on those terms alone. At this stage, for Kant, "taste would discover a transition of our judging faculty from sense enjoyment to moral feeling; and not only would we be the better guided in employing taste purposively, but there be thus presented a link in the chain of the human faculties *a priori*, on which all legislation must depend."11 So there exists an analogy between aesthetic judgement and practical reason (or ethics), as well that other which Kant perceives between aesthetics and the order of phenomenal cognition. Both are in the nature of "as if" arguments — designed to give universal import to aesthetic values while not confusing them either with purely theoretical knowledge, on the one hand, or with ethical judgement on the other. Thus Kant insists that one takes its place in the chain of human faculties, an indispensable link, to be sure, but one whose role in the total system — the Kantian architectonic — needs defining with considerable care and circumspection. Otherwise aesthetics will overstep the limit of its own legitimate domain, with untoward results not only for itself but for the whole enterprise of enlightened critique.

These questions are raised more acutely in the various passages of Kant's third Critique where he discusses the relationship between mind, nature, and aesthetic judgements. What these passages seek is a clear understanding of that faculty's powers and limits, with regard not only to the specialized sphere of artistic production and taste, but also in relation to epistemology on the one hand and ethical reason on the other. For it is evident throughout Kant's writings that the aesthetic cannot be simply cordoned off within a separate discussion of art and its objects. The *Critique of Pure Reason* effectively begins - starts out on its critical path, once over the merely schematic preliminaries - with a section called the "Transcendental Aesthetic." There is something paradoxical about this phrase, since the aesthetic by definition has to do with aesthesis, sensibility,

a capacity for reception from without. Transcendental judgements, on the other hand, are those that derive not from any kind of external impression but strictly from within the thinking subject, by a mode of *a priori* knowledge independent of sensory experience. Kant responds to this by distinguishing "pure" from "empirical" intuition — the latter turned wholly toward the realm of sensuous cognition, while the former is indeed given *a priori* and thus provides a hold for conceptual understanding. There is a sense in which this strategy does nothing more than push the whole argument back a stage. Kant still has to show how the forms of *a priori* knowledge can claim to legislate for experiences whose ultimate source is in the realm of empirical or intuitive sense-certainty. This claim is crucial to his whole enterprise - since epistemology can be saved from the toils of metaphysical abstraction only in so far as it has some demonstrable grounding in the way that experience actually makes sense for us, aside from all abstract determinations, Kant's dictum, "Intuitions without concepts are blind; concepts without intuitions are empty" can belong only on the side of "inward" intelligibility if he fails to offer more cogent argumentative grounds for this intimate involvement of sensuous experience with the concepts of pure understanding. It is here that the aesthetic plays its crucial mediating role, as a source of analogies that Kant will summon up repeatedly through his three Critiques wherever there is a question of bridging the gap between these otherwise disparate orders of knowledge.

The beautiful and the sublime are the two main categories through which the critique of aesthetic judgement hopes to achieve this ultimate reconciliation. We are mistaken, according to Kant, if we seek for some determinate properties in or of the object that would constitute the beautiful as something that precede the act of reflective judgement. For then we would be confusing theoretical knowledge, that which brings sensuous intuitions under concepts in order to establish their objective validity, with the quite different realm of aesthetic understanding. What the latter involves is a "judgement of taste [which] since it is to be possible without presupposing a definite concept, can refer to nothing else than the state of mind in the free play of the Imagination and the Understanding (so far as they agree with each other, as is requisite for cognition in general)."12 Thus the beautiful, whether in artifacts or natural phenomena, is defined in terms of the response it provokes, a response which enables the mind to enjoy a uniquely heightened sense of its own cognitive powers. Those powers are here found in a state of "free play" because there is no determinate concept that binds them to the object in question. But such judgements are nonetheless "valid for everyone" in so far as they reflect the "universal subjective validity of the satisfaction bound up by us with the representation of the object that we call beautiful."13 The knowledge they provide is not therefore a knowledge of the object itself, but a grasp of the faculties that come into play

when that object is perceived under the aspect of aesthetic judgement. Only by way of this "detour" through the form-giving powers of subjective response does the artwork take on those "harmonious" or "purposive" attributes that make it an object of beauty. And this comes about through Imagination's power to conjure up experiences "as if" in accord with the way that Understanding normally works to bring intuitions under concepts.

The beautiful thus stands in a strictly analogical relation to that process of combined and intuitive grasp by which we obtain true knowledge of the world. It is the special gift of genius to raise this analogy to a point where it surpasses all previous manifestations of the kind. In Kant's word, "the thought, undesigned subjective purposiveness in the free accordance of the Imagination with the legality of the Understanding presupposes such a proportion and disposition of these faculties as no following of rules..... can bring about, but which only the nature of the subject can produce."¹⁴ In the case of beauty, therefore, this legislates in questions of epistemological import. With the Sublime, it points in a different direction, since here the mind is brought up against the limits of phenomenal cognition by its encounter with strange, overwhelming, or mysterious kind of experience for which no adequate object can possibly be found. If the beautiful is that which evokes a state of harmonious balance the faculties, the Sublime on the contrary forces us to acknowledge the limits placed upon Understanding by its need to represent experience in the form of intelligible concepts. Thus Kant paradoxically describes the Sublime as "an object (nature) the representation of which determines consciousness to think the unattainability of nature as a sensory representation."¹⁵

Such moments are typically experienced, as so often in Romantic poetry, with a sense of the mind's abjection in the presence of natural forces or phenomena that quite overwhelm its powers of recuperative grasp. But there is also, for Kant as indeed for the poets, a redeeming aspect to this experience, a way in which it points beyond the limitations of natural or phenomenal cognition to a realm of knowledge that exists for us only as rational, reflective subjects. As the mind fails in its striving to discover some objective correlative, some adequate means of representing such moments by recourse to the natural world, so it is driven to reflect on its own "supersensible" nature, that which cannot be determined according to empirical laws of any kind. The Sublime is therefore distinguished from the beautiful by the fact that it surpasses everything expressible in terms borrowed from the realm of sensuous intuition. It relates not to Understanding but to Reason, the source of all ideas that lead beyond knowledge in its cognitive, epistemological mode to knowledge of man's authentically inward (moral) nature.

So the Sublime, even more than the Beautiful, serves Kant as a kind of categorical touchstone for determining the powers and the limits of aesthetic

judgement. In one sense it marks the suppression of epistemological concerns by informing us of that which lies beyond the grasp of any knowledge grounded in the union of concepts with sensuous intuitions. To this extent it indicates a convergence between aesthetics and ethics (or Practical Reason), a convergence at the limit-point where thought finds nothing in the outside world that could match or objectify its own "supersensible" nature. But insofar as the Sublime is still treated as in some sense an aesthetic category, it cannot be wholly divorced from the order of phenomenal cognition. The aesthetic is once again in danger of overstepping its limits, this time by a move that would seek to accord it all the dignity of Practical Reason by invoking the Sublime as a passage beyond mere sensuous experience. But there can really be no such passage beyond so long as we remain, with Kant, in the sphere of an aesthetic understanding whose terms are ultimately borrowed from precisely that phenomenalist realm. If the Sublime appears to break with such ideas — if it seems to force reflection to the point of acknowledging the inadequacy of all phenomenalist models the stakes are proportionally higher since the Sublime, unlike the Beautiful, lays claim to insights of a transcendental order close to those of Practical Reason.

Since it is by virtue of aesthetic form that the imagination brings sensation into accord with the understanding, such accord is not possible with regard to the sublime, the principle of which is formlessness and a concomitant limitlessness. The limitlessness presented by the imagination in the perception of something as sublime is constant with (so the Analytic of the Sublime tells us) the unconditionality of reason. The sublime is in fact an imaginative analogue of how reason attempts, for example, to think the sum of all causal chains in infinite time. Because the sublime as such has no form, something sublime cannot be recapitulated by the imagination in the way that something beautiful can. The imagination of a quality, first, for Kant, requires the successful perception of each unit in that quantum. Then it must combine all units perceived into a single larger unity, which can be present all at once in an immediate awareness. In the perception of something sublime, the units are either too many or too great for the imagination to combine in a single intuition, or they are themselves incommensurate with one another. The whole is too large to be made the present; such presence is however, the demand of reason. In attempting to meet the demand, the imagination fails; it can present only its own inadequacy. The feeling of inadequacy with regard to a given demand can, however, have a positive effect, for it can instill respect for the unity which poses that demand. The great example of this is respect for the moral law in the second Critique. In the Critique of Judgement, the respect is for reason itself, which is revealed to be of sufficient sense the only sublime thing. The mind gains consciousness of its independence of nature. The experience of the sublime can result in no positive rule or concept. Transcending both sensibility and the understanding,

as well as imagination, the experience of the sublime confronts them with an abyss in which all empirical rules and concepts lose standing and count for nothing.

The abyss is reason itself. Reason is not present to itself in an experience of the sublime; it is rather the mind's feeling itself set into unending motion by the effort to imagine the sublime. And the ability to experience the sublime requires cultivation. The cultivation required is the development of the moral ideas which inhabit reason. Without this, the individual experiences the sublime merely as terrifying. The articulation of the sublime would then be a mode in which all concepts and generalizations are undermined in favor of an indeterminate abyss-in-unending-motion. Such interaction achieves no harmonization of the faculties, but disrupts harmonies achieved elsewhere. The imagination is revealed as unable to conform to the demand of a higher faculty, and the awareness of this is pain. But it is a pain which brings forth the higher pleasure felt in respect. Thus, awareness of the sublime does not depend on the object but on how we take it. It is not to be found in works of art, but such works if in their scope they transcend the comparative power of the imagination, can excite the feeling of the sublime.¹⁶

Heidegger's Aesthetics

The labyrinth of Heidegger's thought reveals an enduring mission to appropriate Kant's transcendental philosophy. For a time, a distinctive attempt at a retrieval of imagination was at the heart of this appropriation.¹⁷ The imagination distinguishes a more radical occurrence of temporality which went some way toward overcoming the western tradition's understanding of being as presence. In citing Kant's recoil from the abyss opened up by imagination, Heidegger himself makes a peripheral remark about the parenthetical character of Kant's analysis of imagination in the third Critique.

We cannot discuss here the sense in which the pure power of imagination recurs in the Critique of Judgement and above all whether it still recurs in express relationships to the laying of the ground of metaphysics as such which was pointed out earlier.¹⁸

The implication is that Kant succeeds to a certain extent in detaching imagination from its subservient role in the application of concepts (in both its theoretical and practical forms). But at the same time, Heidegger maintains that in considering aesthetic experience, Kant never brings the true spontaneity of imagination to the fore any more than is already suggested in imagination's recovering its role in forming the temporal horizon of transcended. By attending to Heidegger's most extensive thinking on art, his address entitled "Origin of the Work of Art," we will see how far-reaching is Heidegger's intended

transformation of the architectonic of reason through the imagination's disruptive play. Heidegger will seemingly call forth some deepened employment of imagination as reveling in its own play in a way which goes beyond the limited terrain of aesthetics which Kant outlined. Gadamer recognized this movement beyond while pointing to a deeper appreciation of the role of art in the Greek sense of *poiesis*.¹⁹ Indeed, if Heidegger's retrieval of imagination is to prove successful, it must solicit a form of discourse that remains in concert with the self-revelation of things as occurring, for instance, in the advent of *poiesis* as embodied in the work of art. This will be seen further in the complete abandonment of any tie to subjectivity and the direction of Heidegger's thought toward the Greek experience of *poiesis*.

For Heidegger in "Origin", we cannot analyze the work of art starting from the categories of "thing" or "equipment", since both these categories become accessible only in and through the work of art itself. Works of art can only be explained once their thing-like nature has been fully understood, and for Heidegger this involves wresting thought from traditional non-technological conceptions of the things. Art is in this sense emancipatory, in that it does just this. In the essay Heidegger speaks of the "riddle of art," and of not solving the riddle but seeing it. His theory of art is not directed toward the formulation of thesis which might provide answers to traditional philosophical problems, but rather toward an investigation of the conceptual crises which surround the definitions of these problems and accepts them as genuine. Traditional aesthetic approaches to art are in crises: Heidegger proposes that the inquiry standpoint in aesthetics will need to be overcome if the work of art is to be permitted to show itself. Aesthetics has come to an inquiry standpoint and a network of concepts which have led to the definition of the work of art as an object, the access to which is by way of a special sensuous apprehension or experience. The metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions that have informed the history of aesthetics have conspired to conceal art in its "work-character." His treatment of aesthetics is basically of the same cloth as was his "destruction" of the history of western metaphysics. Art has become a riddle and we want to understand the riddle as a riddle, not solve the riddle. To understand the riddle will provide insights into how various solutions that have been sought are the products of certain prejudgements in one's setting of the question. Heidegger thus throws us back into interrogating our inquiry standpoint, questioning our questioning about art.²⁰

The problem is not only that works of art are pre-judged as things, but that the thing-ness of things is concealed. As such, neither the presence of things nor the presence of the work of art comes to the fore. Previous conceptions of the thing are lacking. The substance-attribute distinction, in which a thing is defined as a subsisting entity to which a variety of attributes finds its mirror

image in the combination of subject and predicate in the simple propositional statement. That conception which specified the thing as the unity of a manifold given to the senses, or that which proposes that a thing be viewed as a synthesis of matter and form, are lacking. The shift in the "inquiry-standpoint involves addressing ourselves to the "work-being" with its thingly character be disclosed in the proper perspective. The notion of equipment in Being and Time misses something in regard to art. The present-at-hand presented entities thematically; the ready-to-hand presents the context in which that entity is significant; the art-work setups that context - it is self-sufficient - [*eigenwuchsigkeit*].

In order to fully understand equipment the best we can do is let a painting depicting a concrete example of equipment tell us what is essential for equipmental being. The van Gogh provides the essential features of equipment - reliability and unthematicity. From this Heidegger argues that precisely because art is the basis of our understanding of equipment (of thinghood), equipment cannot be used in an explication of art. Indeed the face we could read the truth about equipment from the painting reveals the truth-opening character of art. The art-work is self-sufficient - it sets up a universal medium of meaning - it founds a history - it sets it up like an object domain in science. Inquiry involves displacing preconceptions about the meaning of "origin." Aesthetics has variously sought the origin of the work of art in the artist, in the spectator, in the matter of the art object, in a realm of aesthetic values which stands above and beyond the object, in the social structure and conditions in which the artist lived, or in a kind of unified theory of all of these.

For Heidegger the origin of art is not to be found in a source external to art itself. The origin of the work of art is just art. Also, in the work of art, the happening of truth is at work. This is not to be taken as that conception of truth as certainty which located the essence of truth in the conformity of mind with its object. It is not to be taken as related to that conception of truth which Heidegger takes above to become normative for western metaphysics in its preoccupation with the nature, types, and relations of beings and their conformity to the mind. As is spelled out in Being and Time, On the Essence of Truth, and Plato's Doctrine of Truth, the development of truth as *aletheia* and the primal question of being have fallen into oblivion, requiring a dismantling of the history of metaphysics. What Heidegger means in his enigmatic phrase that "Art is truth setting itself to work" is truth as openness and unconcealment, an opening up so as to make visible. Truth is a happening or an event, it is not a property which attaches to the work of art nor is it the contribution of an apprehending and appreciating aesthetic consciousness. It is resident within the work itself. The work of art provides its own self-disclosure. If one asks what then is being disclosed, or what is it that is brought out into openness and unconcealed one needs to be wary of the sirens that lurk in the language of traditional metaphysics.

If our asking about the "what" of disclosure is an unwitting inquiry into a possible essence, or set of properties, or realm of value over and above the art work, then they still remain within the fruitless inquiry standpoint of aesthetics.

It is the primal reality or "work-being" of the work that is disclosed, but this is never a "whatness" of a definable essence as distinguished from the "thatness" of the work's existence. It is of a performative-character, having to do with the performance within the work of art itself, not some value or aesthetic property mysteriously positioned above the object-being of the work, nor it is an activity on the part of the artist or the viewer.

If the questions "What is being performed?" or "What is at work in the work of art?" are to be answered at all, one depends upon Heidegger's notions of earth and world. It is the setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth that is at work of art. World and earth are brought into the open by the performative activity of the work of art. For Heidegger the primary meaning of *techne* was art, the capacity for disclosing something, for bringing it forth, for letting it be seen. Hence both *techne* in the form of poetry and *techne* in the form of modern technology are both modes of disclosure. Heidegger wanted to show how "genuine" *techne* involved a disclosing that preserves and guards them, instead of exploiting and dominating them. According to Heidegger *techne* for the Greeks meant both the event of bringing something into the open and the know-how required for accomplishing that disclosure. Authentic producing was something like childbirth, involving disclosing something appropriately, letting it come forth in its own, bringing it not an arena of accessibility. To produce means to lead it into its own, so that it can linger in presence in its own way [again, *eigenwuchsigkeit* in the art-essay]. Authentic producing is not a matter of an agent using force to push material together into a specific form, but a disclosure of entities for their own sake. In making things, the Greek artisan knew he was letting it be; modern *Dasein* lost touch with the awesome gift and responsibility of this ontologically disclosive capacity and instead understands it as the nonstop industrial production of objects.

Aesthetics inquired into the relation between the perceiving subject and the material art object; but for Heidegger what the authentic work of art enabled *Dasein* to apprehend was nothing perceivable - the work of art revealed the being of entities. Art for Heidegger, taken not as a subject working on something causing it to be, but as a process of enabling things to disclose themselves in accord with their own possibilities, could provide insight into the mode of producing that might replace the producing evident in modernity. Art is not so much the activity of giving shape but the drawing out of what is already there. Here art is defined ontologically, as the event of truth, not as *mimesis*. It does not reproduce what is visible; instead, it makes visible. The great artist did not impose his subjective will upon entities, but instead was claimed by beings as

the site through which works of art could be produced in order to let entities show themselves anew. The artist sought to curb the presencing of entities in such a way that they could manifest themselves in their own ways. Great art was the disclosing of entities as a whole; it brought forth the overpowering presencing of entities. It was a preserving, a measuring, a shaping of entities as a whole. The artist does not give shape to things — the delineation of things by the work of art is achieved primarily by the things themselves. The artist existed as the clearing in which the self-limiting, self-defining disclosure of entities occurred. In this way there is achieved the phenomenological completion of the revealing of things in their essence.

We have thus seen for Heidegger how the origin of the work of art is to be found in art, and, on the other hand, art is actually at work in the work of art. We have seen that works of art unquestionably have a thingly character, but the attempt to explain the thingly character of the work with the help of the common thing conceptions fails. This is because, by asking for the thingly substructure we prejudge the work's genuine, ontological status, and bar for ourselves access to its own work-being. But is the work then ever in itself accessible to us?

For Heidegger, the "work-being" of the work of art consists in the unity-in-opposition of world and earth. The work of art sets up a world. "World" clearly should not be understood here as a collection of objectifiable entities amenable to enumeration and review. World for Heidegger is never an object that stands before us and can be seen, but is the ever-non-objective. To conceive of the world as a totality of numerable entities, as in technological thinking, is to remove the world from the work-being of art and reduce it to a kind of cosmic container to entities or the summation of these entities. One approaches the meaning of world more closely when one takes the lead from the Hegelian notion of spirit. World has to do with the "simple and essential decisions in the destiny of an historical people." World is the historical drama of decision, hope, aspiration, misfortune, and death. World is spirit in its historical becoming.

Likewise, "earth" in Heidegger's use and meaning of it never makes its appearance as an object or some collection of objects. It is to be confused neither with the astronomical idea of a planet and the laws of planetary motion nor with the agronomical idea of soil. It is that upon which man "grounds his dwelling." It is that which is Heidegger's analysis of the work-being of a Greek temple "emerges as native ground." This notion of earth, Heidegger reminds us, is reminiscent of the Greek concept of *physis*, as the self-emerging of that which is. But the Greek concept of *physis* became distorted in its translation into the Roman concept of *natura*. Again, it is the technological-metaphysical tradition which is the culprit. Such thinking transforms earth into "nature" — which carries the double meaning of brute matter or stuff and the form of this which determines the essence of material objects. It is this approach to earth as

nature which needs to be overcome, if earth again is to be permitted to emerge as native ground.

For Heidegger, the temple portrays nothing. It just stays there in the middle of the valley that is filled with rocks. The temple enshrines the statue of the god Poseidon. While concealing the god, the temple nevertheless lets the statue also stand out in the holy domain through the open portico. The god comes-to-presence in the temple by means of the temple, and his coming-to-presence is at the same time both an extension and the delimitation of the open domain surrounding the temple as a holy precinct. The temple does not extend indefinitely — rather, it first orders and gathers around itself the unity of all paths and relations of a particular people. The all-governing range of this open set of relations constitutes the world of this historical people, namely the Greeks who founded Poseidonia. Thus the concrete historical world of the Greek colonists is gathered by and through the temple insofar as the temple lets the god become manifest.

With the temple example Heidegger thus tries to show that a work of art makes present a world as well as the earth; furthermore, he tries to show that in each world a dimension can be distinguished to which he refers with the help of expressions such as the god, and the human, but also with the help of all the events that may occur in the life of a historical people that has this world. World is not a collection of all things that just happen to be here. But neither is it merely an imagined framework which our imagination just adds to the sum of such given things. The world “worlds,” it does what it as world is supposed to do, it governs and holds sway, and as such it is more fully in being than the realm of tangible things in which we believe ourselves to be at home. A rock has no world, nor do plants and animals. But humans have a world because they dwell in the openings of beings. It is the world that “determines” in what way things will be things. The work of art opens up such a world and in so doing it makes space, for and liberated the open and establishes it in its structure. The work holds open the open of the world.

Heidegger's conception of the coming to pass of truth in the work of art is that the traditional view of attributing truth exclusively to statements as the sole and essential place of the truth really has no ground. Truth does not originally reside in statements, but is to be found somewhere prior to them. And what makes this possible is the open character of *Dasein's* comportment which is the inner condition of the possibility of correctness (truth) is grounded in freedom. The essence of truth is freedom.

In the past freedom was defined as freedom for what is manifest; freedom itself was there thus exhibited as man's openness. The manifest to which the statement is to correspond is the being as it manifests itself in and through the open comportment of *Dasein*. Standing in the realm of the open, *Dasein* is able to subject itself to what is manifest and shows itself, and to commit itself to it.

Thus freedom lets beings in each case *Dasein* in indifferent with respect to beings, but rather that it lets in on them. To let beings be as the beings that they are is to concern oneself with the open region, the domain of what is unconcealed.

What makes it possible for *Dasein* to let itself in on beings is the fact that by its very constitution *Dasein* itself lets itself in on the open and its openness, within which all beings abide and comport themselves. This process by which *Dasein* lets itself in on the open is *ek-static* by its very essence so that it is by this process that *Dasein* stands outside itself in the direction of the open. This is what is meant by *Dasein*'s *ek-sistence*, its transcendence by means of which it goes beyond the beings that are open, to the open itself, to the world, to Being. In its essential freedom *Dasein* is on the one hand committed to attain the open only in and through beings; on the other hand, however, *Dasein* transcends these beings to the open itself.

Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy* held that the role of tragedy is to garb the horror of mortality in the "healing balm" of moving and beautiful language that somehow reconciles us to our dreadful destiny. The Greeks for Nietzsche spoke as if human life was not an end in itself but was justified only insofar as it provided a pleasing aesthetic display for the gods. Heidegger developed in his own way the theme that humanity is a participant in a drama or play that is not of human origin. The position Heidegger struggles to is that human existence was a clearing through which entities could display themselves. Rather than humans being active subjects who gaze upon and understand entities, Heidegger maintained that they look at themselves, so to speak, through the ontological openness which was appropriated humanity. Humanity is the clearing, the showplace, the theatre, as it were, through which things bring themselves into view. Rightly understood, human existence is in effect "grasped" by the beings of entities so that they may show themselves and thus be. We do not encounter things so much as they encounter us. In effect, then, humanity has been unwittingly playing the role of the clearing by virtue of which the being of entities may display itself. Of course the phrase "the being of entities may display itself" is awkward and must be employed with care, for "being" means names no entity at all and can never itself appear. So it might be better to say that human existence is the clearing through which exists not for any human end, but is ultimately purposeless, the cosmicontological version of the work of art.

Having become blind to its supporting role in this event of ontological disclosedness, humanity has arrogantly presumed itself the lead, actor, author, producer, director and beneficiary of the drama, and races toward the ever-receding goal of controlling even more of it: rewriting the script and recreating the world according to its measure. For Heidegger human *Dasein* need to awaken to the ultimate purposelessness of history, and come to see that people are players in a game which transcends human ends. This change in humanity to the subject

was not really a human decision, but instead occurred because being concealed itself from humanity. Heidegger came to see history as a series of crystallizations of beings in the mode of beingness: *eidos, energeia, actualitas, actus purus, res cognitans, Wille zur Macht*. The historical formulations of beingness stamped things rather than let them be, or provided the measure or form according to which all things and all human behaviour could show themselves. Thus the history of beings was in effect a history of world forming, artistic disclosures, and in apprehending these various events, these disclosive forms of beingness, one could catch somehow a glimpse of that which could never appear: being as such. Self-concealing being was that which was most sublime and terrible, and the artist or thinker were the clearing through which the being or entities could manifest itself in its various stages.

Heidegger's struggle to express the withering away of *Dasein* into his clearing will become exacerbated with his gradual transition to language as the event of clearing. But one thing that can be said again of the art-essay is that it is no mere romanticism. By maintaining the art involves ontological disclosure, he rejects not only the mimetic definition of art as representing something to a subject, but any view of art being an expression of the soul as well. Nineteenth century romanticism was a late version of Cartesian subjective, reducing art to a matter of private "taste." The great artist did not impose his subjective will upon entities, but rather was claimed by beings as the clearing through which works of art could be produced in order to let entities show themselves anew. The artist sought to curb and limit the pesencing of entities in such a way that the entities could manifest themselves in their own determinate ways. The romantic notion of genius is rejected in favor of being itself "letting beings be." Through this investigation into a non-subjectivist, non-representational art, Heidegger conceives that artist as the disclosive event that transcends human aims and interests. *Dasein* has thus vanished in its becoming the breach into which the power of being bursts in its appearing, in order that this breach itself should shatter.

Heidegger for a time thought Holderlin's poetry made possible the elementary emergence of human existence and its world, even analyzing the inferiority of other poets in relation of Holderlin. Heidegger's later thinking on language signals a movements away from the privileger of Holderlin, or even poets generally, in this regard. Just as Heidegger contrasted Holderlin with Nistzche, in that Nietzsche remained rooted in modern metaphysics whereas Holderlin presaged the overcoming of all metaphysics, and in preparation for the new beginning at the end of philosophy as metaphysics Heidegger turned away from the language of metaphysics to the language of Holderlin's poetry, so Heidegger moves on from the language of Holderlin's poetry to how an everyday thing "worlds world." The essays in the 1950s explore the possibility for a

non-subjectivistic, non-anthropocentric encounter with things. He argued that the abstract "space" of the subject must give way in favor of the concrete "place" of things. The later Heidegger maintained that virtually anything can play the role of opening up the place on which things can encounter each other. A footbridge is not set into a pre-existing place, but rather helps to gather into a shared place the constituents of the fourfold: earth and sky, god and mortals. "Dwelling" describes the mode of existing involved in the mutual play in which everything is allowed to show itself appropriately.

The work of art for Heidegger appears as a "setting-into-work of the truth" insofar as truth is the opening of the historical horizon in which every verification of a proposition becomes possible, prior to or more fundamentally than the correspondence of the proposition to the thing. That is to say, it is the act by which a certain historical and cultural world is instituted, in which a specific historical "humanity" sees the characteristic traits of its own experience defined in an ordinary way. For Heidegger, the work is an exhibition of a world and a "production" of the earth. He emphasizes the notion of exhibition in the same terms we might use for "putting on" an "exhibition as a measure or gallery, for instance; for it implies that the work of art has the function of founding and constituting the outlines which define an historical world. A society or social group - in short, an historical world - recognizes the constituent traits of its own experience of the world [for instance, the implicit criteria for distinguishing good from evil, truth from error, and so forth] in a work of art. This ideal affirms the inaugural nature of the work; in the work of art, the truth of any historical epoch is revealed. The essential element here is not so much the inaugurality of the work, or a "truth" which could be opposed to error, as the constitution of the fundamental outlines of a given historical experience.

Heidegger, Kant and the Post-Metaphysical Sublime

Heidegger's laudatory comments on Kant's Third *Critique* are in his *Nietzsche* lectures in the section "Kant's Doctrine of the Beautiful and its Misinterpretation by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche," the only test in which Heidegger directly discusses the *Critique of Judgement*. He observes that most people have misunderstood the third Critique. This is true particularly of Schopenhauer who in *World as Will and Representation* seems to affiliate himself with Kant, in order then to severely criticize the position of Hegel. Yet Schopenhauer thoroughly misunderstood Kant and his misunderstanding later in turn influenced a great number of others, including Nietzsche. The basic misunderstanding of Kant's aesthetics involves his claims about the beautiful. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant states that the beautiful is what purely and simply pleases; it is the object of sheer delight. Pure delight, in which the

beautiful shows itself to us as beautiful is for Kant “disinterested.” Our aesthetic behaviour which is our comportment toward the beautiful, is thus “a delight devoid of all interest”. Schopenhauer interpreted this to mean that the aesthetic state is one in which the will is put out of action, one in which all striving is brought to a standstill; it is pure rest, a state of simply wanting nothing more, sheer apathetic drift. Nietzsche followed suit in this interpretation. Taking his clue from the first moment of the “Analytic to the Beautiful” Heidegger shows that the notion of the absence of interest is introduced by Kant only as a preparatory step in the effort to delineate the encountered in light of something other than this comportment: in terms of a definition, a purpose, or a pleasure. But instead of settling with the notion of this absence of interest in Nietzsche, (not to mention the Neo-Kantians), Heidegger argues that this “absence of interest” is a negative prelude, or counterpart, to a *real and positive relation to the thing*. This “freedom” consists, says Heidegger, in contemplating the thing for its own sake in its pure appearing. For Heidegger it is such an appearing that is worthy of being favored, since it constitutes the essence of the beautiful, in the Kantian sense. In these conditions the pleasure of reflection does not mean the internal harmony of self-consciousness, but the *thrill that comes of being in our world*.

“Kant analyses the essence of the “pleasure of reflection” as the basic comportment toward the beautiful, In the *Critique of Judgement* Sections 57 and 59 . . . This interpretation propels us toward a basic state of human beings in which man for the first time arrives at the well-grounded fullness of his essence.²¹

The debate Heidegger conducts elsewhere with Kant reveals, in his meditation on the essence of man, an approach to finite transcendence and freedom as the origin reciprocity of spontaneity and receptivity. The “unknown unity” evoked by Kant in the *Dialectic of the Aesthetic Judgement* (sections 57 and 59) is conceived as the root of finitude, whereas Schelling and Hegel conceived of it as absolute identity. Neither Nietzsche nor Schopenhauer realized that for Kant “interest” means that which is important to humanity in light of something else. Thus the beautiful for Kant is that which never can be considered in function of something else (at least as long as it is taken as the beautiful). Our comportment toward the beautiful is for Kant unconstrained favouring. Such favoring is not at all the pouring out of action of the will, but rather the supreme effort of our essence, and the liberation of our true selves for the release of that which has proper worth in itself. Thus the interpretation of Kant, promulgated by Schopenhauer, is wrong on two counts. Schopenhauer takes Kant’s remark about disinterestedness, which Kant made in passing in a still preparatory reflection, to be the only and definitive statement about the beautiful. Secondly, the definition of the beautiful itself is misunderstood and not thought in terms

of the content that remains in each aesthetic behaviour when "interest" in the object falls away. The misinterpretation of the term "interest" suggests erroneously that with the exclusion of all interest every essential relation to the object is also suppressed, but for Kant just the opposite is the case. By suppressing all interests which place the beautiful object in function of something else, one can bring into play the essential relation to the object itself. When all such interest is suppressed, the object comes to the fore as pure object. Such coming forth into appearances is the beautiful. The German word *Schon* means appearing in the radiance of such coming to the fore, and is related to *scheinen*, meaning to shine.²²

In continental philosophy, there has long been the notion of a totalization that can be countered only by a fragmenting. In Heidegger's 1949 "Conversations on a Country Path," he points out that the project of *Being and Time*, to examine the meaning of Being, the *expression* beings, is subject to this same dichotomy. For Heidegger, this dichotomy is revealed to be a function of language. The meaning of the word beings, which was to have been found in the willful representing of an object as standing opposed to man within the transcendental horizon, cannot be found there.²³ This is not, however, due to the inability of the faculty of imagination to present an object adequate to the concept of the faculty of conception. In fact, it is precisely by thinking in these terms that our thought has been misled.

In the first place, Heidegger notes that even when we do try to represent, "What we have designated by a word never has that word hanging on it like a nameplate," for either designation is an arbitrary act with regard to what has been nameless, or more radically, what is named is never the result of designation, because in the region of the word, the word is answerable to itself alone."²⁴

In the second place, the meaning of Being cannot be found in willful representation or in it because "a word does not and can never represent anything." What a word does is signify and by this Heidegger means not that it relates the word to a general concept, but that it "shows something as abiding into the range of expressibility"; it abides in language as meaning, so that, in thinking, we may move freely in the realm of words and not be pinned down to categorical signification by the act of designation and referral.²⁵

In the third place, the word does not represent in the sense of presenting an object as standing opposed to the subject, since "it doesn't matter in this if there is a first retelling or who does it; all the more since one doesn't know whose tale he retells." There is no authorship, ownership, or origination. There is no designation, no representation, no expression or categorical signification, only something (the word) as abiding into the range of its expressibility.²⁶

How are we to make sense of these claims regarding the "region" of the word where "everything" is in the best order only if it has been no one's doing"

within a text that begins to address the "regioning of that which regions" where human beings are appropriated to that-which-regions so that insofar as they think meditatively, they are released from a transcendental relation to the horizon and released into the openness of that-which-regions? Heidegger situated his view of language by positioning thought not between judgements of taste and sublime (the inability to make such judgements), not between the subject's faculty of presentation and the subject's faculty of conception, thus not between the totalized image and the sublime fragmentation. Rather, he positions his thought in relation to the object that pleases, the object of "sheer delight," devoid of all interest — the beautiful. For by Heidegger's account, Kant's insistence that in our encounter with the beautiful our thought must be disinterested, means that we let what is beautiful come before us in its own stature and worth, that is, we must freely grant it its way to be.²⁷ Kant's disinterest in the beautiful, again, must not be thought of as indifference. What is beautiful appears in the radiance of such coming forward, and this is what Kant means by the "pleasure of reflection." Heidegger follows Nietzsche by calling this as interest of the highest kind, "the thrill of being in our world now, of getting rid of our anxiety in the face of things foreign." And as the beautiful is disclosed in sheer delight, in "rapture," in what sense does the beautiful correspond to "what one demands of oneself?"

Given Heidegger's criticism of the transcendental-horizontal structure of *Being and Time*, he would not want to account for beauty in terms of rapture since that would be to have fallen back within the metaphysical circle of totalization, the beautiful as sounding the development of taste. Nor would he accept the alternative insofar as dismantling totalization would force him into characterizing disinterest negatively, as merely the exclusion of all interest, the exclusion of all ideology and the detachment of the beautiful from any meaning. What the notion of rapture demands is, instead, a self-fulfilling characterization of beauty. Rapture, according to Heidegger, is a state that explodes the subjectivity of the subject. Beauty "Breaks through the object that has been confined at a distance," So that the beautiful is no longer an object standing opposed to a subject. "The aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective."²⁹ Rapture and beauty designate this aesthetic state, what is opened in it and what pervades it.

For Nietzsche, what is opened and pervades the aesthetic state is guided by what each type of evaluation finds beautiful, that is, honorable and worthy, what we trust we are essentially capable of. As such, it is a question of strength and, in rapture, a question of ascending beyond ourselves. The state that explodes subjectivity and objectivity is that of the grand style or the "Classical" which embodies a taste not for the beautiful but for complexity and uncertainty, and whose ideology is founded upon the notion of the "protective mastery of the supreme plenitude of life," as well as "reaching back to the most original states

of embodying life," in order, as Nietzsche wrote, to become master of the chaos one is. Thus, for Nietzsche, (in spite of Heidegger's claims otherwise) beauty is the *result* of an evaluation arising out of a mode of existence rather than a phenomenon creating a mode of existence.³⁰ But for Heidegger the aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective, leads to a recognition of the event of language. In "rapture" there is a release from the confinement of a subjectivity confronted by an objectivity, release from representational thinking, subjective expressiveness and categorical significations. To think of rapture as releasement into the event of appropriation means to think not in terms of metaphysics and the metaphysical qualities of substances with their accidents; of the object manifested in designation, representation and reference; of cause and effect manifested in subjective expression: of signification manifested by subsuming the object under categories. For Heidegger, we can think appropriation as the belonging together of man and Being only because in thinking the event of appropriation takes place. So we might say, according to Heidegger's own formulation of the question, that appropriation as language is the regioning of that which regions, wherein a word may show something as abiding into the range of its expressibility but not as an actually existing object, a subjective expression or a categorical signification. The region of the event of appropriation is the region of the word in relation to other words and not in relation to things. It is thus the region of expressibility, but not the subject's expression; it is the region of meaning, that is textual meaning. The coming together of man and Being in appropriation is an event of language and not an effect of metaphysics. Beauty is not the quality belonging to a mythical or poetic object, nor is it an aesthetic attitude. For Heidegger it is in the pleasure or reflection, the beautiful appears in the radiance of coming-forward, and beauty breaks through the object that has been confined at a distance so there is neither subjectivity nor objectivity. The poetical as *poiesis* is not works of art, the artistic or aesthetic experience; it is every revealing of coming to presence into the beautiful, the rapturous event of appropriation which takes its place in the region of words, in language.

What happens when we let what is beautiful come before us in its own stature and worth and freely grant it its way to be? For example, when faced with a detached work of art (a painting by van Gogh) Heidegger claims that the work does not represent, but that whenever art happens there is a beginning, a thrust out of nothing, something is brought out of the source of its nature in a founding leap.³¹ As a founding leap, the work of art is a pictorial representation "useful" in the discovery of the world of the peasant woman. As such, Heidegger instrumentalizes the work of art so that one forgets the work as art and sees only the world of the peasant world. A similar happens in the case of beauty. Certainly for Kant, the beautiful is the object of sheer delight devoid of all interest, but for Kant this means only that it is without finality, without an end. And taste is

the capacity to judge such an object apart from any interest or sensation or cognition. This is why all judgements of taste, although they include a demand for universal agreement, are none the less singular and refer immediately to feelings of pleasure or displeasure and not to cognition. The state of mind producing these feelings must be one in which no definite concept provides a rule of cognition for the manifold of intuitions gathered by imagination.

This is because although taste must be an "original faculty" and so not determined according to some empirical model, *it is a priori*. Taste can be trained, but only those who have got "all they want" can tell who has taste. Presumably they are the ones with the means to go and look at reputedly beautiful things with their own eyes, and they are the same ones who can train others whose taste is yet untrained though not barbaric. Taste cannot simply be learned then; it is not cognitive, and surely not everyone will have the originary faculty that can be trained.³²

Since additionally any determining interest deprives the judgement of freedom, Kant wants to distinguish himself from Rousseau and from any empiricist aesthetic by claiming that aesthetic taste is totally distinct from social and cultural and political values. Taste is concerned with objects of delight and plays with them without devoting itself to any sincerity. It puts them on a pedestal, so as to receive the strongest sensible impact from them "just as if our delight depended on sensation." In fact, sensation is important for Kant, because we become conscious of the universal nature of a judgement through sensation in the harmonious "quickenings" of imagination and understanding. This facile play of mental powers, the pure sensation whose uniformity is broken by anything foreign, the regular play of impressions added to sense, corresponds to what Heidegger calls rapture. But what produces a pure judgement of taste is the signifying play of forms and lines external but necessary to the representation of the object.³³ It is, then, the paragonal structure of the intuition. The beautiful in nature must be the simple mode of sensation, what is most exactly, definitely and completely intuitable, because it is no object of a judgement of taste, only the pure intuitable form.

Heidegger has sought to carry Kant across the threshold toward a renewal of transcendental philosophy. Kant's thought describes the narrowing of the openness in which a thing is predetermined for manifestation. Even before considering the more extended sense of nature as *physis* which Heidegger endorses, there is an immediate occasion to address the animating feature of the natural order within transcendental philosophy, notable the experience of the sublime. The sublime points to an emergence of nature more qualitatively than quantitatively, as a "size" which resists numerical calculation. The experience of the sublime is not bound by the chain of Newtonian causality within the

sensible order, but instead reveals the same characteristics of spontaneity and inventiveness which distinguish the holistic dimension of human freedom. In other words, there is an even deeper dimension of finitude whereby what is most intimately related to *Dasein*, its capacity to be its own "there," turns out to be that "power" which is least at its disposal. That is, freedom is to be coordinated with the openness *Dasein* already is, and as such escapes any configuration of actions or intentions that the self may have.

Kant's recognition that the sublime cannot be truly captured by the predicates of transcendental logic proves particularly telling. The aesthetic experience corresponding to the sublime unfolds according to a different act of judging having prepredicative roots, a reflective as opposed to a determinate judgement exercised in theoretical science, Kant's innovation for Heidegger lies in uncovering the prepredicative level of experience, in deploying the possibility of our relation to things according to objective determinations of the categories from *anunthematic* openness. It still remains questionable whether in the third *Critique* Kant arrives at a sufficiently original attunement to *physis* which can offset his earlier subjectivity and consideration of nature as an object present-at-hand and exhibit its affinity with the dimensions of *poiesis* and *techne*. The ability to make a link with the third *Critique* in order to mark a certain overlap of concerns lost in the cracks between the first and second *Critique* governs Heidegger's thinking with Kant. Heidegger is calling fourth a deeper level of manifestness stemming from *physis* which otherwise is hidden within the theoretical determination of nature for objective science. He is seeking the weightiness of things in terms of their affinity with *physis* as self-emerging presence. Kant never reaches this more radical level of interpretation or is even in position to appropriate the Greek understanding of being.

For the Greeks, *physis* entails a more expansive way of revealing which is more attentive to the uniqueness of things than what occurs with the overtly constrictive view of beings as one-dimensional objects of scientific investigation. Insofar as man's nature is reintegrated back into the broader purview of *physis*, the dynamic emergence of nature elicits the "there" prior to any distinction between subject and object. In this work Kant in relation to Freedom, Heidegger overturns the division between freedom and nature in showing an alternative path to resolving the third antinomy. The second *Critique* should no longer be read as providing a haven for a supersensible source of volition divorced from nature. Rather, freedom must be recovered in its essential unity with nature in marking the expansion of human concern within the greater compass of *physis*. Heidegger's work on freedom defines and reopens once again the concern for

experiencing nature primordially through its relation to art and *techne* as documented in the third *Critique*.

As with the Kantian sublime, so the Heideggerian earth is something undisclosed and unexplained, something which unfolds itself in an inexhaustible variety of forms and shatters every attempt to open it up to full presence. Like Kant, it is something dynamic; the work of art contains an "inner concentration of motion," and with motion drives beyond itself to its unfathomable source. It as well transports us from the fixed and regulated certitudes of our current life. But the difference lies in the terminal point of the transfer. For Kant, our experience of the sublime puts us into a motion which culminates in a feeling for our own true nature, for the infinite abyss of reason itself. For Heidegger the terminus is something other, since there is no infinite, monumental realm - not even in thought - to which the experience of the sublime could bring us. The Heideggerian dynamic is a withdrawal, not from all fixed determinacy, but from the concrete set of determinacies that constitutes an individual world; and it is just as much the setting up of a new world. As such, the Heideggerian art work sounds more like the Kantian aesthetic idea than the Kantian sublime; just as the aesthetic idea was itself unconceptualizable but provoked an infinite variety of new rules, formulations, and concepts, so for Heidegger does art. Heidegger cannot distinguish, however, the aesthetic idea, understanding was unable to come up with a single formula which would capture everything in it; but imagination was able to recapitulate the sensory givens into a coherent fully present whole, and the aesthetic ideal was thus grounded in the full and harmonious presence of a sensory object. Heidegger's view absorbs the Kantian aesthetic ideal into the Kantian sublime; without a postulate of a unified source, he cannot allow such functioning to the imagination or indeed to the spectator at all. Thus the Heideggerian art work and the Kantian sublime operate through the very inability of the art object to be made fully present. For Heidegger this abyss is never left behind but continues to yawn open every apprehension of the work of art as such.

This yawning open today perhaps takes the form of the invention of conceptions which are unpresentable, not yet been blessed by the solace of good forms, marked by the continual state of what is being born. In the terms of the Kantian sublime, it is the inability of the subject's faculty of presentation to be adequate to the subject's faculty of conception forcing thought into a position where it dangles between the alternatives of image and fragmentation. The opening between totalizing and fragmentation for the later Heidegger is revealed to be a function of language. The meaning of the word "being" which was to have been in the

willful representing of an object as standing opposed to man within the transcendental horizon cannot be found there. This is not due to the inability of the faculty of imagination to present an object adequate to the concept of the faculty of conception.

In recalling the guiding thread of Heidegger's exchange with transcendental philosophy, a clue is given as to the significance which an examination of the sublime has for adjudicating the larger crisis to metaphysics. Specifically the rapture points to where reason's own self-developed enclave breaks down the receding focus to totality which eludes reason's search for the unconditioned; this gulf has its proper corollary in the continual withdrawal of what beforehand provides an orientation toward the whole, namely the world. Due to its own power to recede in wake of what can be directly apprehended, world marks that slippage whereby the dimensions of our own concern which have been rendered superfluous, even to the point of beings marginalized, can be recovered through alternative avenue of disclosure. The retrieval that is suggested is one which rather subtly arises through Kant's account of the sublime. For the experience of sublimity points to the expansion of human concern whose margins escape those offered by a rational determination of nature *qua* present-at-hand, that is, according to synthetic *a priori* principles; the sublime points to a niche of experience otherwise excluded from the mathematical disclosure of nature, since its occurrence indicates a more immediate, direct revelation of the whole within which various types of manifestness become possible. Seen from Heidegger's perspective, there can be a comportment proper to the sublime, just like the beautiful, because a disposition toward wholeness can intrude upon our everyday experience in varying degrees, marking a certain rearrangement of our concern which opens up multiple dimensions of human existence. What then appears as uncanny does so from the standpoint of the fixity of everyday interpretive modes. One is struck by something so great which, even while seeming to rest on a numerical comparison, in fact points to the creation of a totally new standard that renders all comparison meaningless. The boundlessness defining the experience of the sublime indicates a faculty of mind which surpasses every standard of sense. Indeed, for the later Heidegger the unconstrained favouring turns into the general economy of the gift, a receding origin, the absent presence which precedes every relation of property, every "present" of an accountable exchange. The sublime favoring is a given which displaces the opposition between giving and withholding, in which the "own" becomes disposed.³⁴

The sublime opens a crack in which the underside of reason can appear; it does so, however, only to the extent that a wide, alternative space may be created

which allows that experience to become meaningful beyond the scope of rationality. The possibility rests in the prior advent of world which unobtrusively emerges as the spacing whereby new alternatives for manifestness can unfold within the confines of the everyday, the familiar. The counterthrust to the familiar consists of the silent play of the world. This play supplies its own law in a way analogous to the way that the free play of the cognitive faculties in a "reflective" judgement produces a lawfulness which occurs without applying separate rational principles, or categories. Accordingly, such play prefigures the kinds of aesthetic experience that Kant outlines in the third *Critique*, including the beautiful *vis-s-vis* the free play of imagination in harmony with the understanding and the sublime through the disruptive interaction between imagination and reason. As Heidegger describes in the "Origin" essay, the view of art which arises from attending to this play entails a totally new appreciation of *techne*, *poiesis*, and *physis*. Even while not explicitly broaching the third *Critique*, he nevertheless has opened an avenue extending from Greek thought, from which the parallel concern for beauty can be raised, in the light of the deeper advent of *poiesis*. This subsequent development points to a stage which seems to retrace much of the ground already cleared in the exchange with Kant, only to embark in a new direction of the expansion of the openness that Heidegger has already identified.

The new direction is one in which Heidegger seems to take only Hegel as his guide. Could one not argue that with Kant, in strict conformity with the doctrine of favor, there is the analysis of art not understood in terms of Hegelian progress or decline but as a domain of origination, of an enigmatic irruption of nature that does not cease to be renewed in the interplay with the tradition that inspired it? Is there not an approximation in Kant's third *Critique* which sees the past of art as not dead, something merely handing down the tattered remnants of bygone ages; but as pregnant with futures, a new opening to the enigma of unconcealment itself, a waiting beyond receiving or expecting, an unconstrained favoring which has released itself into openness? Is not Heidegger's more radical demand to address what is unthought in transcendental philosophy in response to Kant's thinking equally in terms of its omissions as what is embryonically prefigured in it, a post-metaphysical sublime?

Notes and References

- 1 Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume 1: Will to Power as Art*. Translated by Davis Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 111, 108, 113.
- 2 Kant, *Selections*, ed. Theodore M. Green. [New York: Scribners, 1975]
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 418.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 419.

- 5 Ibid., p. 420.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., p.375.
- 8 Ibid., p.376.
- 9 Ibid., p. 384.
- 10 Ibid., p. 381.
- 11 Ibid., p. 381 - 82.
- 12 Ibid., p. 390.
- 13 Ibid., p. 390.
- 14 Ibid., p. 430.
- 15 Ibid., p. 411.
- 16 The best example in the *Critique of Judgment* might be that of Saint Peter's basilica in Rome, which is simply too large to be taken in by the mind.
- 17 No Heidegger scholar has pointed this out better than Frank Schalow in his work *The Renewal of the Heidegger-Kant Dialogue: Action, Thought, Responsibility*. New York: SUNY Press, 1992.
- 18 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. 4th edition. Translated by Richard Taft. [Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1990.], p.110.
- 19 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Translated by Garrett Barden. [London: Sheed and Ward, 1975], pp.29ff.
- 20 Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. [New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pp. 17-87.
- 21 Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume 1 : Will to Power as Art*. Translated by David Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 112, 113.
- 22 This is why (as Taminiaux has, to my mind conclusively pointed out in *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment*. New York: SUNY Press, 1993) Heidegger suggests that Schiller alone grasped the essential of Kant's Doctrine of the Beautiful. Schiller was without doubt that the first Korner, (known under the title "Kalliasbriefe" because in these letters Schiller discusses the project of a treatise on the beautiful, a project he subsequently abandoned), bears witness to a very close meditation on Kant's work. This meditation continued to sustain his later major philosophical essays, in particular his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Schiller approached Kant from the perspective of an itinerary that had already opened up its own vistas. Because of this original thinking itinerary, a central problem emerged that was bound to prescribe what kind of spirit would preside over Schiller's reception of third *Critique*. One might formulate the terms of the problem as follows: on the one hand Schiller takes the celebration of what he calls the "One-and-all", the omnipresent ontological power of unification and reconciliation, as the leading theme of his poetic saying. One finds evidence of this in the first poems of the *Gedankenlyric*. in their celebration of the gods of Greece, of joy, and of artists. Such celebration comes to the fore with a specific conception of freedom and nature - a conception very different from what one might expect after Kant's first two *Critiques*. This freedom is not what it is for Kant, man's self-positing enacted in his negating of immediacy. It is conceived by Schiller as the movement by which man subscribes to the affirmative force of the One-and-all and welcomes what comes to be manifested in its midst. Nature is not what it is for Kant, the causal system objectified by the pure concepts of the understanding, or the antithesis of a properly human activity. It is conceived as a sort of favor granted to man, a gift calling for his approval and which he feels a deeply rooted kinship. To this conception of freedom and nature, a conception of beauty is linked. Beauty is nothing but the very radiance of omnipresence, understood as the deeply rooted concordance of man and nature. Schiller endorses Kant's criticisms of the empirical and the rationalist approaches exposed in the analytic of the third *Critique*: the beautiful cannot be located in the mere capacity to be affected by the sensations, any more than in a perfection whose essence is logical in origin. The reason is that Schiller wants to unite sensibility with spirit. It is within the same synthetic

perspective that Schiller entirely subscribes to the notion of "favor" as devoid of interest and unconstrained satisfaction. "Let it be as it so wills to be", he appeals in defence of the beautiful object in a letter that we are justified in considering as a sort of commentary on the "First Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful"; then he adds, "As soon as we judge [the beautiful object] aesthetically, we only want to know whether it is what it is by virtue of itself alone." [see Schiller, *On the Aesthetically Education of Man*. Translation by E. Wilkinson and L. Willoughby. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, letter 3.] No wonder Heidegger suggested that Schiller alone grasped the essentials of Kant's thought.

- 23 Heidegger, "Conversations on a Country Path," in *Discourse on Thinking*. Translation by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper and Row, 1966], p/ 74.
- 24 Ibid., p. 71.
- 25 Ibid., p. 69.
- 26 Ibid., p. 72.
- 27 Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*. Translation by David Farrell Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 109.
- 28 Ibid., p. 112-113.
- 29 Ibid., p. 123.
- 30 Ibid., p. 112,126.
- 31 Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," op. cit, p.83.
- 32 The reference to "original faculty is from *Critique of Judgment*, Sect. 17; that "taste can be trained" is from Sect. 14; that only those who have got "all they want" is from Sect. 5; those "untrained though not barbaric" is from Sect. 13.
- 33 See Derrida, *La verite en peinture*. [Paris: Flammarion, 1978], p. 111.
- 34 I am thinking here of the famous "Es Gibt" of Being in Heidegger's *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

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Modesty as Modality Toward Appreciation of the Fragment in Japanese Literature

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The pendulum swings in the study of any literature, although perhaps more slowly in the case of Japanese. The overall assessment of the possibilities for form in that national literature have changed more noticeably in the West, with its limited acquaintance, most often via translation, than in Japan itself. Even there, however, it is not unusual to encounter indictments of the fragmentary and presumably under-developed nature of much of the writing that has come down to us. What are critics to make of certain tendencies in Japanese literature that have been criticized both inside and outside the country and led to its virtual dismissal, in some quarters, from consideration as a great inheritance? In this post-deconstructionist, postmodern age, perhaps the elliptical, centripetal literature of Japan will finally be appreciated, even as the substantive canonical works of other traditions fragment into multiplicities of inconsistent meanings. If this is to happen, however, it will require a renewed attention to actualities of Japanese literature and its histories, not just an application of postmodernist theory.

For many years it was felt that traditional Japan had produced a literary output of scant proportions, characterized by the preciousness of individual works. Even people who devoted themselves to its study, such as Frederick Dickins or Basil Hall Chamberlin, did not hesitate to say how light they found this literature, and how lacking in resources for organization or sustained employment.¹ It was a given that Japan had no literary monuments worthy of the name, no epics or extended oeuvres. The exceptions, such as the fifty-four chapter *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) from Murasaki Shikibu or the twenty-book long court anthologies of poetry were explained as not much more than the sum of their parts. The chapters of the *Genji monogatari* struck some early Western scholars as separable parts, not at all well integrated. Long works such as Takizawa Bakin's (1767-1848) 106 volume *Nansō satōmi hakkenden* (*A Tale of Eight Dogs*) were dismissed as monolithic and repetitive. Anthologies were of course mere cobblings together of poems, organized rather crudely, it seemed,

by topic. The height of Japanese aesthetic accomplishment, the haiku form, was in its seventeen syllables symbolic of the strong points in the Japanese literary imagination—sparseness, shortness, and pith (which also made it limited, repetitive and constricted, according to the devil's advocates).

The present generation, influenced by studies beginning in the mid 1960s, is comfortably settled into a different view of Japanese literature. In this estimation, *Genji monogatari* is a complete work by a single author, deserving of book-length studies that speak to its wholeness. The anthologies are interwoven by means of association and progression, techniques of linking that give them a rhythmic, theme-based flow. Many more full works, such as the twelve book martial tale—*Tales of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari*) or the extensive history *Okagami. The Great Mirror* are available in translation, and we recognize their substantiality and comparability to Western analogues. Even pieces that are produced on the spur of the moment, without predetermined schemes, such as linked poetry (*renga*), are open to analysis of their links as contributions to an overall artifact.²

In the past decade, a counter-movement to this valorization of Japanese literature for its lengthy and well articulated achievements has reemerged. Konishi Jin'ichi's important history names brevity as a chief characteristic of the literature, without implying any disapproval (13). An excellent consideration of linked poetry by Gary Ebersole reminds us that its main aim was not to cohere but to change as each new stanza was added, the constant shifting of topic and imagery being truest to the impermanent nature of the world (50-53). H. Mack Horton has argued that the best intentions of literary creation in group settings were sometimes undercut by actual practitioners, whose notions of fullness could not be met on every occasion due to squabbles and other external factors (480-85). These current reassessments differ from earlier understandings of the literature in making no pejorative remarks. They are based on an acceptance of Japanese poetry and prose largely on its own terms, and tend to avoid the suggestion that Western standards of monumentality, continuity, narrative focus and the like are the sole measures for good or successful literature. In that sense, they adequately address many of the difficulties inherent in looking at another culture's production.

Realizations that there are different kinds of structuring principles and various levels of accomplishment in other literary worlds move our discussion to a new plane where unfavourable comparison is not a foregone conclusion. Have we gone far enough yet towards comprehending traditional Japanese literature as it is?

I would like to suggest that we have not, and probably cannot until we modify a typical concomitant of our role as readers, which is the search for unified meaning. The reading process compels to us engage in "consistency-

building," a subconscious plotting of continuity in a text that according to Wolfgang Iser precedes the finding of pattern in what we have read (53). Such consistency-building leads to a too quick assumption about what should result, and unfair standards about well-structured literature, since that literature that helps us achieve the most in terms of developing a coherent pattern is seen as the most sophisticated in conception and composition. It may be, and I would argue sometimes is the function of a work not to lead us to easy confirmation of the structured nature of the universe, as seen in the result of a clear, comprehensible design, but to allow us to experience precisely that part of nature that is not tidy and neatly regulated. Not all literary art is a centrifuge, in other words; some of it wants to blow apart our ordinary tendency to homogenize the world. The Japanese literary tradition is especially well supplied with examples of this kind of orientation in writing.

If a work of literature were truly random, the best interpretation of it would preserve its randomness. Studies of perception indicate, however, that objects and events are usually interpreted by the perceiver as having some arrangement; indeed, it appears that there is no perception without the imposition of some kind of structure.³ Since we are unlikely to be able to suppress the search for pattern during the enactment of reading, it behooves us to focus as much as possible on authors' strategies. Once we recognize what a writer has done and told us to destabilize our usual perceptions, we may be able to fight the tendency to search for pattern, and thus comprehend the work in its fragmented form. Here we enter a realm of contradictions, however, due to certain aspects of the nature of interpersonal communication in the Japanese context. For many works, we are faced with writers who hesitate to state the vision of the writer-reader interaction that they anticipate. They refuse to make any gesture that would tell us how to behave as readers, or even refuse to identify themselves as holding a position of authority. Foreseeing the possibility that their readers will be above them in social rank, or inhibited by the fact that they do not have official sanction or patronage, these writers retreat into a modest mode that finds them making statements to deny the efficacy, intention, and even right to existence of their works. Typically, they will claim to have put brush to paper without forethought, written with no attention, and have meant to tear up the work upon finishing it. Opening their pieces with humble disclaimers of this sort, or offering self-deprecating asides throughout, they often choose to produce what look like disorganised fragments with no artistic design. The most extreme cases are identified as a genre, the *zuihitsu*, literally "following the brush," or miscellany. Defined as a piece or series of pieces that record the author's encounters, beliefs, observations randomly and in no set fashion, *zuihitsu* seem to place no burden on either producer or consumer to take them seriously or to try to understand their purpose. To take such writers'

disclaimers at their face value, nevertheless, is to miss a dimension of deliberate authorial design that may be lurking behind or in the margins around the disclaimer. Critics who assume that the only potential relationship between an author and such a work is the unmediated transcription of personal feelings, opinions and experiences, tend to reduce many different kinds of works to identically inspired imprints of their author's mental makeups. This procedure results in ignoring or downplaying the unstated aims of authors to contribute to the enrichment of knowledge or taste in their culture. And it personalizes a body of literature that is too vast and too valued by its culture to all be private writing in the strict sense. So much Japanese literary output falls into the *zuihitsu* category, and it is read and appreciated so enthusiastically, that it would be absurd to call it all as useless and disposable as its authors do.

Before assuming that the modesty of an author is a real, unmotivated attitude requiring that we fulfill the dictates of any humble preambles, we need to investigate the history of this mode, where and why it appears in certain writing, and whether its overt aims and claims fit with the illocutionary force of the pieces for which it is typical. The first thing to note is that disclaimers of the usefulness of writing are not unique to Japan. Chinese and Korean writings that often served as models for Japanese are full of similar statements. Lines dismissive of a text as play, as the product of idleness, and as without merit are endemic to miscellanies in both those traditions. Peter H. Lee renders one from the Korean miscellany by Yi Chenhyon (1287-1367) this way:

The logograph for "oak" contains *nak* as its phonetic. It can be said that if a tree which cannot be used as lumber can be far away from harm, it is a joy to the tree: hence I follow the reading *nak* ["joy"]. Once I was an official but left office to "enjoy obscurity." Hence I styled myself Nagong, hoping that a tree that would not make number might live long. The logograph *p'ae* contains *pi* as its phonetic. Looking into its meaning, I see that the millet is lowly among grains. When I was small, I knew how to read books; but in the prime of my life I gave up learning. and now I have become old. Upon reflection [I see that] I have gladly jotted down miscellaneous, confused writing, devoid of substance and lowly like the millet. Therefore I call my record *pisol* (4).

The author struggles mightily to convince the audience that his writing is useless, yet the very fact that he does conceive of a readership betrays his motive, which is to purchase latitude for unorthodox treatments of subjects. The reader does not have to be too sensitive to gather that something of the sort is Yi's intention.

Modesty also obtains as a mode for Western medieval authors, hesitant to offend their god by displays of pride. "The Author's Apology for his BOOK" from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That which is to*

Come is a case in point:

but yet I did not think

To shew to all the World my Pen and Ink

In such a mode; I only thought to make

I knew not what; nor did I undertake

Thereby to please my Neighbor; no not I,

I did it mine own self to gratifie.

Neither did I but vacant seasons spend

In this my Scribble; Nor did I intend

But to divert my self in doing this,

From worser thoughts, which make me do amiss (1).

Such an apology is plainly aimed at establishing rules for the interaction between author and reader, in this case perhaps inoculating against any rejection of the text on the grounds that the writer has been un-Christian by devoting so much time and energy to spinning a profane work.

As the Bunyan example suggests, the modest disclaimer does not constitute a denial of meaning. In apologizing for his "Scribble," the writer does **not** mean to imply that the work has no message, or that it should not be read with an eye toward discerning that message. While he may ask for latitude in judgment of his outcome, and attempt to deflect responsibility for any shortcomings he has unwittingly displayed, if we were to take him entirely at face value and conclude that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was a mere personal diversion, we would do a disservice to ourselves and to English literature. The aspect of individual diversion must remain a factor in our interpretation of the text, but it **cannot** become a rationale for disregarding the spirit of the work, which includes exploring in great depth a passage to spirituality. By the same lights, when Japanese authors apologize for their words and invite the audience to deposit them in the nearest litter receptacle, we must look to the rest of the work for some other sense of what it was meant to accomplish.

The earliest example of an humble disclaimer in Japanese literature occurring in a work that is identified with the *zuihitsu* genre is found in the so-called *Pillow Book* (*Makura no soshi*) of sei Shonagon.

It is getting so dark that I can scarcely go on writing; and my brush is all worn out.

Yet I should like to add a few things before I end.

I wrote these notes at home, when I had a good deal of time to myself and thought no one would notice what I was doing. Everything that I have seen and felt is included.

Since much of it might appear malicious and even harmful to other people, I was careful to keep my book hidden. But now it has become public, which is the last thing I expected

After all, it is written entirely for my own amusement and I put things down exactly as they came to me. How could my casual jottings possibly bear comparison with the many impressive books that exist in our time? (267-68)

Sei's ambivalence about her writing is very much in evidence in her statement. While she belittles herself and her talent, and describes the text as consisting of "odd facts, stories from the past, and all sorts of other things, often including the most trivial material" (267) she is plainly also aware that she has already been well received, and that her humility is not completely necessary. It is, however, socially requisite for a woman of her low rank at court to maintain a decorous pose in her presentation to the outside world. Her larger motivation, we can gather, was to describe and praise the manners and taste of the court salon to which she belonged. Since she was writing in the service of the Imperial Consort Teishi, she could bask in that glow and admit to a certain elevation of purpose, as in the central passage of her apology:

One day Lord Korechika, the Minister of the Centre, brought the Empress a bundle of notebooks. 'What shall we do with them?' Her Majesty asked me.

'The Emperor has already made arrangements for copying the "Records of the Historian."'

'Let me make them into a pillow,' I said.

'Very well,' said Her Majesty, 'You may have them.' (267)

Here we see Sei Shonagon implicitly comparing her "jottings" to the compilation of an official history on the distaff side of the court. If we read her *Makura no soshi* in the light of this comparison, we will have to come up with rather different explanations for the schemes of arrangement that link the text. The form of the work is plainly not a simple reflection of her temperament, as some have said, but rather might tell us something about the way women organized information and cultural evaluations around the year 1000. Unfortunately, it is not entirely possible to pinpoint these schemes for *Makura no soshi*, as it exists in four different textual lines with radically diverse styles of organization.

We are in a slightly better position when it comes to the early fourteenth century work *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*). Here the humble disclaimer thoroughly rejects the reader:

What a strange, demented feeling it gives me when I realize I have spent whole days before this inkstone, with nothing better to do, jotting down at random whatever nonsensical thoughts have entered my head (3).

This message is a challenge to the audience to question the value of the text, the sanity of its author, and by extension its own sanity in bothering to read such nonsense. The segments of the text themselves, however, while they veer among many different modes of lyric, didactic, expository, and personal,

are full of messages that fourteenth century readers would have viewed as worthwhile, and that the author himself, the lay priest Kenko (c. 1283-c. 1352), displays strong feelings about. Here modesty serves as a strategy to concentrate the reader on the task of finding meaning by denying messages just where they are obvious—immediately following the disclaimer, the writer launches into a discussion of what is most desirable in life. The overall organization of the text similarly offers repeated notions of what is valuable and important, only to undercut them in succeeding passages by focusing on the shortness of life and its unpredictability. The unstructured structure of the work functions to constantly confront the reader with inconstancy and Buddhist impermanence.

To understand such a piece of literature, it is incumbent upon us to remain open to kinds of organization and literary standards other than the typically Western. I may now modify my earlier suggestion that we need to move away from the usual search for unified meaning through reading. It is not enough simply to say that some writers may have hoped to provide a reading experience that highlights something other than patterned structure. It is rather the case that we must redefine the object of our gaze as not necessarily conventionally ordered. We need to see fragmentary works not as deviant, but as different. The fragment, itself, and its way of colliding with other fragments, have roles to play in speaking to us of the nature of phenomena. Until we are able to appreciate the fragment and its own logic, we will still tend to judge some literary traditions outside the West with unfair and indeed bankrupt expectations of rigid architectonics.

Notes and References

1. Dickins entitled his turn of the century study *Primitive and Mediaeval Japanese Texts*, but he seems to have thought "primitive" was the operative word.
2. Studies of *Genji monogatari* include that by Norma Field and one by Haruo Shirane. The linking techniques of association and progression were uncovered by Konishi Jin'ichi and reported to the English-reading public. *Renga* links are the object of analysis in Earl Miner's book.
3. To quote Nelson Goodman: "Perceiving motion, we have seen, often consists in producing it. Discovering laws involves drafting them. Recognizing patterns is very much a matter of inventing and imposing them. Comprehension and creation go on together" (22). Heisenberg's uncertainty principle guarantees us the same outcome.

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Scholastic Philosophy and Gothic Architecture

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Scholastic philosophy and Gothic architecture are generally considered to be related. Erwin Panofsky, for example, finds that they share more than a "mere 'parallelism'".¹ He describes their development to be "astonishingly synchornous".²

In *Medieval Architecture, Medieval Learning: Builders and Masters in the Age of Romanesque and Gothic*, Charles Radding and William Clark attempt to establish a feature that Scholastic philosophy and Gothic architecture share and which also differentiates them from their predecessors. They find it in the "mental process" of the philosophers and master builders working in the two disciplines.³ They propose that what distinguishes these thinkers is that they constructed integrated systems of solutions to intellectual and aesthetic problems.

I will show that Radding and Clark's thesis is false. I will argue that while they correctly describe the Gothic master builder's cognitive approach to construction, this mental process does not separate him from earlier workers. Then from my discussion I will establish a feature which distinguishes the Scholastic philosopher and the Gothic master builder from their predecessors. It is that they are engaged in an analysis of the languages of their disciplines.

I. Scholasticism versus Pre-Scholasticism

In contrast to Scholasticism's comprehensive approach to problems, pre-Scholastic philosophers considered each question individually. They did not emphasize ascertaining the relationships between issues or their solutions in order to establish a comprehensive system of thought.

Abelard's work, on the hand, is paradigmatic of Scholastic thinking. One of his concerns with the solution to a problem was what were its implications for the solutions to other problems. As a result of his interest in the relationship of implication, Abelard devoted much of his work to the study of logic. Thus in addition to using it as a tool for reasoning he analyzed the language of logic itself. This investigation required a second language, what today is called a "metalanguage".⁴ Consequently, not only was Scholastic thinking distinctive

in its attempt to establish a coherent theory but it also introduced the analysis of the language the discipline employed to express this theory.

Radding and Clark propose that analogous to Scholastic philosopher Gothic master builders took a comprehensive approach to problems. They maintain that the evidence for this type of mental process is found in the edifices. For them a Gothic construction's revealing characteristic is "a space whose unity an observer would readily perceive".(7) They argue that this feature required that "instead of designing architectural elements sequentially as they were needed," the Gothic master builder "differed from earlier builders" and "designed all of these elements in advance of the actual building".(7)

Conversely, then, Romanesque architects' mental processes were supposedly like those of the pre-Scholastics. They considered problems separately, not as a comprehensive plan. Thus Radding and Clark conclude that with Scholasticism and Gothic architecture there was a transformation in cognitive approach: "the shift to handling entire systems of concepts and design elements". (144)

II. The Romanesque at Saint-Dennis

In an effort to establish their thesis as to the difference between Romanesque and Gothic master builders, Radding and Clark offer an interpretation of certain aspects of the church at Saint-Denis. They attempt to show that a difference between features of the church's west facade exemplify their proposed difference in cognitive approaches.

They claim that the Romanesque master builder is responsible for "only the three portals, the strongly projecting pier buttresses between them, and the horizontal molding is indicative of this master builder's manner of thinking. Their reason is that it is approximately 20 centimeters higher on the south side and thus is not completely horizontal. Their explanation for this deviation is that the master builder was attempting to obscure the fact that the north and south portals differ in height. Citing the results of Sumner Crosby's investigations as their authority, their proposed evidence for their interpretation is :

Crosby has argued that the builder first planned the doorways using dimensions based on those taken from the eighth-century nave and transept, and then, to disguise the fact that the heights of the portals differed, accommodated the moldings to the portals.(66)

They conclude that this demonstrates that the Romanesque master builder worked typically "as the philosophical masters had worked before Abelard, taking each problem sequentially, with the solution to one defining a context to which the next had to be adapted."(66)

They claim that the Gothic master builder executed the work on the upper levels of the facade. They note that despite the dimensional discrepancies between the two side sections none of the lateral lines in this area deviate from the horizontal. For them this suggests that "whereas the first builder worked from problem to problem, the second builder . . . worked back and forth between the different architectural and sculptural elements." (66) Thus Saint-Denis' west facade is supposed to demonstrate that what distinguishes Gothic master builders is their attempt to "coordinate design elements into a coherent plan". (122)

III. The Accuracy of Radding and Clark's Interpretation

Before turning to the question of whether Radding and Clark's thesis is correct, I would like to establish whether their argument is consistent. If it is not, then it is impossible for their position as a whole to be acceptable.

Consider what they have to say about a Romanesque edifice the church of San Vivente at Cardona. As I will discuss, their interpretation is true of many other pre-Gothic buildings as well. They emphasize "the thoroughness of the planning" that its design of spatial units required. From this they correctly conclude "thus it is not possible that the combination of piers, pilaster strips, and transverse arches that articulate the space was achieved haphazardly or by trial and error. This effect had to be planned at the beginning". (14)

Note that this mental process is not the reactive, sequential one they attribute to Romanesque master builder, e.g. the one who worked on Saint-Denis' west facade. Rather, this is the approach of "coordinating design elements into a coherent plan" which is supposed to distinguish Gothic master builders. Therefore their interpretation of San Vicente's construction contradicts their thesis as to what differentiates the Gothic from the Romanesque.

Furthermore, their analysis of the formation of Saint-Denis' west facade is unacceptable. Consequently it does not support their proposed difference in mental processes between Romanesque and Gothic master builders. There are several reasons.

First of all, it is questionable whether two separate individuals directed the building of different parts. Crosby maintains that only one person was responsible for the west facade.⁵ This militates against Radding and Clark's claim that the non-horizontal molding over the central portal exemplifies a different master builder and thought than that exemplified by the horizontal ones.

Secondly, the west facade's twin towers and the three portals along with the non-horizontal molding are according to Radding and Clark the product of a manner of reasoning which was "sequential" as opposed to one which "coordinated design elements into a coherent plan". However, Crosby points

out that the facade is not just an "exterior embellishment".⁶ The twin towers, already "developed to such a degree by Norman masons," are set back so they are an integral part of the whole western section of the church.⁶ The result is a westwork, which is of a Carolingian origin and thus a product of well-established construction procedures.⁷ Consequently similar to San Vicente, it is more following a pre-designed plan which was the product of much advanced and traditional thought.

The most telling reason that Radding and Clark's interpretation is unacceptable is that their reading of Crosby quoted above is false. His diagnosis of the non-horizontal molding is opposite from what they claim.

In contradiction to them, his argument is not that this molding was an afterthought whose purpose was to "disguise" the difference in height between the two side portals. Instead, following Suger, the master builder knew in advance through the use of "arithmetical and geometrical instruments" that the side aisles were of different widths, and it is an elementary fact of plane geometry that "triangles with bases of different lengths have apexes at different heights".⁸ The result of the difference in the side-aisles' width is that the south portal is 30 centimeters wider than the north one. Thus its apex is almost a meter than the north portal's.

Crosby proposes that when the entrances were begun the master builder instructed his workmen to employ "normal medieval design procedures". This he maintains was the "cause" of the non-horizontal molding, just as it was the cause of the difference in width and thus in height of the side portals.⁹ So the molding was no more a product of sequential thinking than were the width and height disparities.

Furthermore, Crosby concludes that subsequently the horizontal moldings were constructed in responses to the one over the central portal. It follows from his investigation, therefore, that in contradiction to Radding and Clark they are a product of sequential thinking.

Consequently for Crosby the non-horizontal molding is the result of a mental process which is the opposite from what Radding and Clark claim. This is true of the horizontal moldings as well. Thus Crosby's analysis implies that Radding and Clark fail to establish that Saint-Denis' west exemplifies a transformation in the cognitive approaches to construction between Romanesque and Gothic master builders.

IV. The Unity of Pre-Gothic Space

We have seen that Radding and Clark's own interpretation of San Vicente at Cardona contradicts their thesis as to the difference in mental processes between Gothic master builders and their predecessors. Numerous other pre-

Gothic edifices also negate their proposal. Consider Saint Michaels at Hildesheim. Its design justifies the conclusion that its construction resulted from a comprehensive cognitive approach, the type of thought process Radding and Clark claim distinguished Gothic master builders.

For instance, the exterior manifests a strong east/west polarity. This is prominent in the square towers over both crossings which are conjoined with a stair-turret at the termination of each of the transepts' arms. Analogously, the ground plan follows a rational, organized system. It is sharply divided into modular sections resulting in distinct geometrical relationships. The consequence is an integrated design creating a unified interior space in which proportion is central.

Saint Michaels demonstrates that Radding and Clark are mistaken in claiming that the Gothic "surpassed" its predecessors in "aesthetic coherence". (7) Contrary to them, it is implausible to interpret the mental process which resulted in this earlier edifice to be one which took "each problem sequential, with the solution to one defining a context to which the next had to be adapted". Rather just as with a Gothic building, Saint Michaels is the product of a thought process that prior to construction created a design which integrated the solutions to aesthetic problems into a complete system.

Consequently the conceptual approach Radding and Clark specify does not distinguish Gothic master builders from pre-Gothic. We have seen, though, that it does differentiate Scholastic thinkers from pre-Scholastic. Therefore in the respect Radding and Clark mention pre-Gothic master builders were more advanced in their approach to problems in construction than pre-Scholastic thinkers were to problems in philosophy.

V. Romanesque versus Gothic

We have found that Radding and Clark do not succeed in establishing the respect in which Scholastic thought and Gothic architecture are related uniquely. The reason is that contrary to their general view the interior spaces of buildings of the Gothic's predecessors are unified. This mistake in interpretation prevents them from capturing the differences in the thought processes between pre-Gothic master builders.

In order to determine this difference, I will attempt to establish distinctions between Romanesque and Gothic design which would be indicative of this difference. I will discuss that while the interiors in both Romanesque and Gothic buildings are unified, their space is structured differentially. I will argue that Radding and Clark's proposed difference in cognitive approach does not follow from this formal contrast in spatial unity. I will then consider differences which to follow.

We have seen that both types of design create a unified interior space. However, within this shared coherence there are two important contrasts. One is in the type of design elements employed. The other is in the manner in which these elements are formally arranged. After considering these distinctions, I will discuss the respect in which they are linguistic.

The prevalent Romanesque design elements are volumetric: cubes, spheres, cylinders, pyramids, and cones. They are employed to produce semi-circular arches, groin vaults, domes, columns, and pilasters. The Gothic, on the other hand, created buttress, tracery, pointed arches, and systems of rib-vaulting while simultaneously emphasizing the modeling capacities of light.

Paul Frankl distinguishes three types of forms for interpreting the arrangement of these elements. They are spatial, optical, and mechanical. In response to Radding and Clark's emphasis on spatial unity, the first type is the most relevant. Frankl calls the structuring of interior space into a unified whole the "geometry of aesthetics".¹⁰ Under his interpretation of this concept a building's spatial form is an abstraction analogous to the abstract forms of geometry.

He argues that the Gothic structuring of space results in a style of "partiality".¹¹ The reason is that each section is an incomplete fragment, not an independent whole. It is the result of a division within a whole. Thus the Gothic creates unity through the subdivision of one space.

In contrast, unity is achieved in the Romanesque through the union of several self-contained spaces. The bays illustrate this process. They result in the impression that they form a larger whole by their "addition".¹² Coherence by junction is similarly found in the system of vaults. Since the Romanesque achieves spatial unity through addition, Frankl considers it to be a style of "totality".¹³

Thus Radding and Clark are correct to emphasize the difference between the Romanesque and Gothic approaches to space. They are mistaken; however, they suggest that only Gothic master builders "integrated different design elements into a motivated theme to conclude erroneously that the thought process was unified.

Similar to Frankl, Crosby finds the Gothic to transform the Romanesque "cubic, additive" space into a series of less sharply defined volumes which "can only be experienced in relation to other, adjacent volumes".¹⁴ His description of how this is accomplished provides insight into the contrasting techniques the Romanesque and the Gothic employed in achieving their distinctive arrangements of a unified space:

The massive piers, instead of having their axes parallel or perpendicular to the walls of the aisles, have axes that are on a diagonal, so that the enclosed volumes are octagonals rather than cubes; and the piers attached

to the wall, instead of continuing, or accenting the planes of those walls project diagonally out from them."¹⁴

along with spatial form Frankl distinguishes optical and mechanical. A Romanesque building's frontal images produce its optical form. The impression of frontality results from the consistent use of 90 degree angles. It is enhanced by surfaces that are either parallel or perpendicular to the principal east / west axis. Mechanical form is found in the Romanesque's emphasis on "the solidity of stone and its capacity to preserve its spatial form under pressure".¹⁵

With the Gothic, ribs counteract Romanesque frontality while directing the viewer to experience images obliquely. This contributes to a diagonal form. In contrast to the Romanesque mechanical form's sense of permanence, the Gothic's is perceptible as a channel of a continuous upward flow

VI. Structure versus Thought

Notice that the differences between Romanesque and Gothic architecture which I have been discussing are concerned with types of spatial components and the forms in which they are structures. This is not to be confused with a difference in the thought processes by which these elements and their forms were designed or built. For instance, in discussing the Romanesque Frankl urges that the "aesthetic impression of genesis by addition has nothing to do with actual genesis."¹⁶ Radding and Clark make a similar point when they stress that "*what* was created" must not be confused "*how* it was thought out". (4. Their emphasis.)

Nevertheless, recall their incorrect description of the mental process of the Romanesque master builder of Saint-Denis' west facade as "sequential". The explanation of why they gave this interpretation is that evidently they took the additive manner in which Romanesque spatial components are structured to be indicative of the cognitive approach in which they were built. Thus they inferred from the difference in Romanesque and Gothic spatial forms a difference in the master builders' thought processes in the construction of the three forms.¹⁷ Their own inference, then, was the type they correctly criticize.

It is worth noting, furthermore, that in their desire to find a correlation between the Romanesque and the pre-Scholastic they might have also been influenced by the sequential quality for the latter's approach to philosophical issues.

VII. The Languages of Architecture

We have seen that there are fundamental differences between the Romanesque and the Gothic in the design elements they employed and the types of forms in which they arranged them. These distinctions between the two styles

of architecture are analogous to those between the vocabularies and syntax of two languages. This analogy, then, provides a respect in which the contrasts I have been discussing between the Romanesque and the Gothic are linguistic.

Similar to differences between any two languages and their users, these differences between the vocabularies and forms in architecture would turn in differences between the mental processes of the master builders who employed them. It follows, therefore, that a Gothic master builder differed cognitively from his Romanesque predecessor both in terms of the concepts of design elements he employed as well as in the types of forms in which he mentally structured these concepts.

Analogous to Romanesque and Gothic master builders, Abelard also employed a language to create a coherent system, *viz.* logic. Furthermore, he investigated this language. As I noted earlier, this required a meta-language derived from logic. Abelard, then, was employing the constituents of a discipline to analyze the language of that discipline.¹⁸

Panofsky attributes a similar concern to the Gothic master builder. He proposes that "the panoply of shafts, ribs, buttresses, tracery, pinnacles, and crockets was a *self-analysis* and *self-explication* of architecture".¹⁹ It is beyond the scope of this essay to attempt to establish the respects in which this is so. Panofsky suggests, though, that this view of the Gothic would be apparent to "a man imbued with the Scholastic habit", that is, with the desire for complete clarification through a maximum degree of explicitness.²⁰

Panofsky's view of the Gothic master builder contributes to the kind of thesis Radding and Clark tried to establish. It is one which identifies a mental process that is common to Scholasticism and Gothic architecture while differentiating them from their predecessors.²¹ The thesis I would like to propose is that unlike the pre-Scholastic and the Romanesque, and Scholastic philosopher and the Gothic master builder were engaged in an analytical investigation of their disciplines' languages.

VIII. Scholasticism, Gothic Architecture, and Modernism

The preceding conclusion establishes a significant respect in which twelfth and thirteenth century philosophical thought and architecture anticipated the movement called "Modernism" of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Clement Greenberg's defining essay "Modernist Painting," he takes Modernism to be the use of the "methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself".²² He finds this self-analysis to have begun with Kant. In response to Greenberg, Leo Steinberg perceives it in painting as early as Giotto.²³

However, it follows from the above discussion that this type of investigation began even two hundred years earlier with Saint-Denis and Abelard.

Furthermore, this transformation of mental process is the kind Radding and Clark sought in the Scholastic solutions of philosophical problems and in the Gothic forms of architectural space.

Notes and References

- * I am grateful to Professor Cecil Striker for his numerous helpful insights into the analysis of Medieval architecture.
- 1. Panofsky, p. 20.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Radding and Clark, p. 3. all further references to this work will be made within parentheses in the essay.
- 4. Alfred Tarski introduced the concept of a meta-language into twentieth century philosophy for the purpose of resolving certain paradoxes. See W. V. Quine's "The Ways of Paradox" for discussing these paradoxes and the use of a meta-language to resolve them. Radding and Clark allude twice to twentieth century philosophy, pp. 28 and 58. However, they do not recognize that both this period and Scholasticism employed meta-languages, much less than this relationship has a bearing on the significance of twelve and thirteenth century thought.
- 5. Crosby (48), p. 15; and Crosby (63), p. 87.
- 6. Crosby (81a), p. 17.
- 7. For a discussion of some of the detailed preconstruction planning, see Crosby's discussion in Crosby's (81b). Stephen Gardener in "The Influence of Castle Building on Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Paris Region" comments on other aspects of the pre-construction design of the west facade.
- 8. Crosby (81b), p. 120.
- 9. Ibid. p. 119.
- 10. Frankl (62), p. 14.
- 11. Ibid, p. 12.
- 12. Ibid, p. 10.
- 13. Ibid, p.11. For further discussion of the concept of spatial addition, see Frankl (68), p. 29f.
- 14. Crosby (63), p. 86.
- 15. Frankl (62), p. 11.
- 16. Ibid, p. 10.
- 17. In Paul Crossley's critique of *Medieval Architecture, Medieval Learning*, he infers a less specific though similar conclusion to the one drawn here. The weakness of his argument is that he fails to recognize that for Radding and Clark's thesis space is the concept central to distinguishing between Romanesque and Gothic design.
- 18. Radding and Clark seem to be aware of this aspect of Scholastic thought. (p. 58) They fail to appreciate, however, its significance for the relationship between Scholasticism and Gothic architecture.
- 19. Panofsky, p. 59. My emphasis.
- 20. Ibid, pp. 30, 58, and 59.
- 21. In *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* Panofsky proposes an identification between the Gothic and the high Scholasticism of St. Thomas Aquinas. He does not consider, however, the question of distinguishing them from the Romanesque and pre-Scholasticism.
- 22. Greenberg, p. 5. Greenberg does not specify the dimension of the discipline which is analysed, in particular the discipline's language.
- 23. Steninberg, "Other Criteria", p. 71.

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A Comment Upon the Linguistic Analysis of Folk Art

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Folk art analysis, more than in the study of other aesthetics, has resisted the interdisciplinary approach most evident in general literary criticism. It has been suggested that the field is, almost by nature, closed to comparative perspective, and as such is inherently heretic. Folk art historians appear to have been reluctant to evaluate a body of folk art in structuralist and poststructuralist terms because so many of these works articulate themselves linguistically. Most analyses transparently raise questions about the nature of significance, and subvert themselves as works of art, questioning the premises which permit us to conceive of these objects and images as art and not as an expression of craft alone. Is folk art criticism reluctant to reduce these expressions of native talent to text and timid to enter the so designated and described "paraliterary space" characteristically noted as "... the space of debate, quotation, partisanship, betrayal, reconciliation . . . ?

Does folk art history also resist becoming an "intellectual bricolage" of methods? Folk art history, especially the current "outsider or visionary" phenomenon, lags behind the study of other types of art and aesthetics. Whether this circumstance is to be attributed to the lethargy of the collectors, or to the custodians of art, is not important. Are the latter too caught up in administration and the preparation of exhibitions and catalogues to channel their residual energies into analytic writing? Are they too preoccupied with archiving the newest discovered folk art practitioner or attempting to determine what folk art actually is to really evaluate the field?

It may be that the conservatism and inertia fostered by the sociology of the profession of art history contributes to the environment of present folk art criticism. The only changes catholic enough to be effective should come within the institutions of art history, and must directly alter the way those institutions relate to the phenomenon of contemporary folk art.

General art history is still legalistically territorialized as an area of rather clearly defined boundaries, even if many works of art no longer can be given definite categories. Art history resists "de-territorialization" and is not prepared

to become an arena in which objects of art can be considered as "particles" or "sign posts." Turning visual art into linguistic art, vision into sign and writing, for many is regarded as a constant. The dynamics of contemporary folk art stand in full face of this structural.

Reductionism as applied to folk art is fraught with implications that undermine certain cherished assumptions about art in general. More implicit than explicit, these exercises are the basis for a kind of mystical belief in the ultimate irreducibility and specificity of visual art. Despite all analysis of folk art, it remains ineffably itself; an entity apart. Perhaps in the end it is the emphasis on the ineffability of folk art that argues against the reduction to highly speakable, in complexly interlocking, descriptive terms. There is a peculiarly hermetic, cult-like character to folk art appreciation and collection. These particular assumptions are responsible for its fetishization and sacralization of the visual response as applied to folk art.

Traditional art history's sense of its essential mission, the hidden agenda underneath all its examination, is the preservation of the visual best that exists. This explains art history's museum orientation or belief in the "musical" character of art, and its preoccupation with exhibitions. A museum may have the authority of a mausoleum for certain art forms, and for traditional art history it may be the best of all possible visual worlds. The museum is the repository where the best visual works are preserved, like trophies in a temple. Folk art may be best appreciated in its own environment; as it were, the natural habitat. Historically a museum is the place in which the authority of art of such, and of individual artists, is affirmed. It is the last refuge and stronghold of autonomous art and autonomous authorship. However, this exhibition space might contextualize them historically. Since the intent of the folk art is often to beautify the artists's personal environment, this may represent their temple to share their visual expression, rather than a museum. David Butler only wanted to use his tin cutouts to decorate his home, and Ralph Griffin's root sculpture certainly made his yard unique and beautiful.

An assumption of the art critic is that the visual work of folk art is inherently precious, which makes it an elite object; that is, privileges it above other objects. The elite object is inseparable from the idea of the aesthetic and to the museum attitude towards it. One should distinguish between art criticism deriving from a elitist aesthetic and the need of the folk artist to reveal what makes this special object so important. This revelation turns a craft into folk art, with all the exemptions and privileges conferred by the term "art." However, the criticism of traditional art history resists and seeks to deny the sacramental specialness of this art. Commonplace images and subjects may very well become unique of construction or material employed. The found objects of a Lonnie Holley do, indeed, substantiate this idea.

The disabusing, secularizing criticism of folk art often takes the form of a seeming antisubjectivist, scientifically objective identitarian though which can be described as reductionism. From the point of view of traditional art history, linguistic reductionism is as good as any other means of denying the specialness of an art form, and certainly of folk art. Traditional art history resists the linguistic appropriation of folk art's visual specialness.

The visual image of folk art is closer to the madness of inner life; has more of sacred madness than the exposition of art. It has been said that worthy critics are ashamed or afraid of the momentary and passing madness which is found in all real creators. The visual impact of folk art, rather than literary commentary about its images, is closer to this madness.

Freud noted, that seeing is an activity that is ultimately derived from touching, that "visual impressions" remain the most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused. Some folk art works can indeed be regarded as careful orchestrations of libidinal excitations. Although an Archie Byron or a Charlie Lucan will deny the anatomical implications of their more provocative images, the shapes and spatial relationships have only thinly veiled messages. The visual experience provides us with a greater opportunity for the expression or repressed libindinal impulse than does the verbal. This suggests that the visual experience is closer to the structure of human needs. The visual representation can be regarded as a primary, and the verbal a secondary, means of articulating human needs through these forms of communication. Impulse seems to run from image to word with decreasing momentum.

In folk art interpretation, the transgressive image is converted to the social word. The visual limage is closer to the primal, and as such more fundamental than a literal interpretation. The deprivileging of the visual that occurs by regarding it linguistically may amount to a repression of its libidinous character, of its so-called sensuality. To see a Leroy Allmon relief panel is a much evocative experience than is reading a description thereof, however creative. The visual is, in general, closer to the primitive root of the subjective than is the verbal, and as such more able to be utilized to articulate the anguish repressed by political forces, for example. Some of the images of a Lonnie Holley have just this klimpact.

Art may also be verbal, and a verbal work may indeed be compared with a visual expression of creativity. A visual work of folk art has inherently more to do with bodiliness than the literary work of art. One could even argue that the determination to read the work of art as a structure of signs is part of the progressive concealment of the work of art which goes along with civilization. It is part of a general concealment of many subject, including the human body, that supposedly assists us to become civilized. Sexual curiosity about the libindinal surface of a work of folk art can be repressed by reading it as a costume party of signs.

A visual work of art metaphorically stands for the body, and as such can be said to "have more body" than the literary or purely verbal translation of a work of art. Visual folk has a more profound emotional effect on the viewer than does the literary conceptualization. The folk art object is more likely to generate gut feelings" spontaneously or to restore temporarily a prototaxic mode of being. The prototaxic mode involves the experience of momentary states with no before and after, and no awareness of serial connection between them. Such states are more likely to be induced by the instantaneousness of the folk work of art than by the successiveness characteristic to the literary work. The folk art's instantaneousness is seductive because of the immediate gratification it affords. The work is conducive to prototaxical experience of oneself.

Another assumption of traditional art history is that the critic/scholar/exegete's activity is secondary to the artist's primary activity. Traditional art history disputes the primacy of any type of criticism and denies that it is an imaginative act of the same order as the work of art. It is profane in comparison to the sacred work of art, and in a sense profanes it through unloving analysis. The traditional art historian would say that the "new" folk art may have already happened. This may be the level on which criticism is equivalent to it, but only the folk artist can make it happen again, which is why the artists and their presence are necessary. Artists repeatedly free the visual from the imprisonment in the "already happened" linguistic which has already occurred.

The paradox of art history in relation to folk art is that it needs to resist methods, such as the psychoanalytic, which might assist in articulating the implications of many of these underlying assumptions. Traditional analysis seems to feel that such methods would disintegrate the object they are meant to expose - that exposure is inherently destructive, and beside the point of intuitive/contemplative and ultimately empathetic demystification and tearing down any notion of elite, even in the realm of the man-made objects. Traditional art history often postures itself as a shelf between the philistine and unbelieving world, including the world in which it spiritually cheapens folk art by commodifying it. Traditional art history in its protective mode, especially through enlightened understanding, seems often to devalue a folk art object. Linguistic analysis of folk art often amounts to a reductionistic attack from a traditional art-historical point of view. Folk art critics seem interested in this art form only for its exchange value; that is, the linguistic value it can be exchanged for. From the traditional art-historical point of view, the new interdisciplinarianism, with its intellectual universalism, is a repression of folk art and of the import of the specifically visual, whose sacredness only sensibility can recover.

Contemporary folk art is given the mantle of a phenomenon and as such is vulnerable to a transitory life. Many regard it as a phase akin to childhood or adolescence. This fails to recognize its primal etiology, as well as its variety

of expression. To view this important movement in only those traditional descriptions and categories of standard art history may indeed undervalue its message, and certainly fails to recognize its inherent importance. The message may indeed be more fundamental than our current nomenclature can fully recognize.

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Aesthetic Aspects of the *Bhagavadgita*

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While ethical discussions of the *Gita* justifiably abound, an aesthetic analysis of the text can further illumine its import. In this essay, I identify various senses in which the *Gita* is aesthetic. Of course, the title itself contains an aesthetic term, because *Gita* means the song of the Lord. In addition, the term Bhagavad refers to bhagavan, i.e., the god who possesses all opulences (bhaga). And the supreme opulence, according to Parasara Muni, is unlimited beauty. Radhakrishnan's commentary on the *Gita* underlines this relation between the beautiful and the divine, "... things of beauty and splendor reveal Him more..."¹ Similarly, Sri Krishna Prem describes Lord Krishna as the "Beauty of all things beautiful".² Moreover, in the *Gita* (x,22), Krishna identifies himself with the Sama Veda that is known for its aesthetic value, whether characterized as "musical beauty"³ or as "melodious chants"⁴ Not surprisingly, the idea of the beautiful finds a place within the doctrine of the *gunas*. Of the three *gunas*, *sattva*- which is usually associated with goodness—is also linked to beauty as light, for when *sattva* prevails the beautiful light of knowledge beams (xiv, 11). Furthermore, Krishna takes up the lamp of wisdom in chapter ten. (X, 11). Later he requests credit for his dazzling beauty, "That brilliance which shines in the sun, in the moon, and in fire illumines the entire universe. Know that brilliance to be mine."⁵

Obviously, the *Gita* is a work of art in two straight forward ways; it is a poem and a story- whether one interprets the narrative literally or allegorically. There are also internal, poetic devices, as in the simile: "Everything in this universe is strung on Me like pearls on a thread."⁶ Krishna goes so far as to identify himself with the poet Ushana (x, 37). And also identifies himself with rituals and sacrifices (ix, 16). All such activities are aesthetic, for they are expressions of feeling; and as vehicles for the transmission of emotion, they constitute art. Again, if works of art typically unite opposites, it is no wonder that the *Gita*, which unites theism and monism, fatalism and freedom, man and God, is a commanding artwork. Simplicity and complexity apply, because, despite the brevity of the text, there have been endless interpretations and commentaries.

Bhakti, a central notion in the *Gita*, is the way of complete surrender to God. We normally condemn surrender or submission; after all, humans are supposed to be free, independent, autonomous agents. Nevertheless, total surrender to God may be the only antidote to egoism. The devotee's unqualified surrender to Krishna calls to mind an artist's total surrender to his project, as when he gives himself entirely to and is led on by a theme, medium, or materials. Whether an adherent of the *Gita* or an artist, one holds nothing back; he invests heart, mind, and will wholly in the other. Ironically, to effect this immersion, one turns to detachment or distance. This is true because suppressing the ego allows one's higher self to merge with the other. Not only is this a part of the moral life, but it is also a part of aesthetic behaviour. Thus a classical article in the literature of aesthetics explains mental distancing.⁷ Through desireless action (*nishkama karma*) or "acting without acting," one transforms everyday acts into sublime offerings. In ethical actions, "I am not the doer," for the ordinary self gives way to the nobler Self or Atman that is continuous with Brahman. Similarly, in creative acts, the lower self is not the doer, for it is only the greater self that can produce great art. Like the doctrine of wu-wei in Taoism, the actionless action of the *Gita* means natural action rather than stagnation. Often philosophers attribute beauty to whatever is natural or true to its own character. One finds an ethical parallel in the *Gita*: "Better to perform one's own duty (*dharma*) imperfectly than to perform the duty of another perfectly."⁸ This is true, because one's own duty conforms to one's true nature.

One who acts with no regard for the fruits of one's actions is internally detached (ii, 47-8 and 50-1), like the actor in a play who distances himself from personal concerns in order to deliver a controlled performance. Viewed from without, the actor appears to be deeply embroiled in his actions, but viewed from within, he is removed from them and their outcomes. Moreover, the actor is unaffected by whether the drama is a comedy or a tragedy. In a like vein, the *Gita* recommends, "Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat . . . Thus you will incur no sin"⁹ The beholder of art works often favors a distanced perspective in order that he can appreciate them without partiality or prejudice. Obviously there is a tension between distancing oneself from the art work and losing oneself in it. The paradox of distance asks: How can one reconcile the need for distance between oneself and the artwork with the yearning to unite or merge with it? One resolves the paradox when one realizes that two selves are thematic: the self that requires distancing is the self-centred self or ego; and the self that seeks union is the Atman.

At times, artists produce and appreciators appreciate without regard for rewards. They recognize that artistic value, like ethical or religious value, is inherently worthwhile. To have the aesthetic attitude is to create or behold with no concern for consequences. One who follows the *Gita* is also unconcerned about consequences; he participates vigorously in the affairs of world, but

inwardly he is unruffled by events. A follower of the *Gita* does the right thing just because it is his duty; and it flows from his nature. And the true artist honors an inner, aesthetic impulse, irrespective of the consequences. In other words, the ideal artist works in the face of economic opposition and is oblivious to success or failure, good or bad reviews. This is a laudable sense of "art for art's sake" that parallels the Hindu notion of ethical conducts as deeds that one performs with no regard for fruits, but for their own sake alone. Indeed, the Lord himself is detached when creating, above and beyond all creations (ix, 8-9). Similarly, the artist needs psychical distance in order to control his creative endeavor. If the artist were preoccupied with her provincial ego, he could not express the universal. An artist's or beholder's attitude is all important, just as in the *Gita* one's attitude creates or determines one's future state (xiii, 6). Thus, those who fix upon the extrinsic features of an art work, e.g., its monetary value, lack the aesthetic attitude, i.e., an interest in intrinsic value.

As the *Tao Te Ching* says that one cannot express the eternal Tao in words, chapter eleven of the *Gita* teaches that ultimate knowledge is ineffable; one can only know it through direct experience. Likewise, aesthetic awareness is experiential rather than conceptual. Art tries to communicate what conventional language can never fully convey. Aesthetic experiences and religious experiences are always ineffable to some degree. One reason for their ineffability lies in the uniqueness of what one encounters, whether it is Clive Bell's "significant form"¹⁰ that elicits a unique aesthetic emotion or Rudolph Otto's "wholly other"¹¹ that is like nothing else. A second reason for the ineffability of the aesthetic and the spiritual lies in their inexhaustibility. No exposition of such experiences is ever complete, with all nuances articulated; indeed, what is central in such experiences is necessarily inexplicable. Thus ineffability is a universal hallmark of mystical states of consciousness. Of the painter Monet's work, the fellow artist Marc Chagall said, "There just aren't the words to talk about his painting." In the standard article, "Aesthetic Concepts," Frank Sibley argues that no matter how many facts one knows about a painting in advance of seeing it, he cannot judge the work aesthetically until he beholds it.¹² The reason is that descriptive labels or concepts—however many and however elaborate—are no substitute for the concrete perceptions, impressions, intuitions, and feelings that arise on beholding a work as an aesthetic gestalt. As the theologian Paul Tillich remarks: "One cannot interpret a picture by stating its meaning in discursive sentences and then dispensing with visual form. Every work of art—a poem, picture, piece of music—has something to say directly to its audience that cannot be expressed by scientific formulas or the language of everyday experience."¹³

D.T. Suzuki asserts that if one applies prose language to the spiritual, such discourse, "... becomes warped and assumes all kinds of crookedness: oxymora,

paradoxes, contradiction, contortions, absurdities, oddities, ambiguities and irrationalities.”¹⁴ Therefore, one purpose of religious symbols is to bridge two realms: the seemingly transparent domain of everyday life and the transcendent world. Typically it is spiritual and aesthetic experiences, rather than theology, which convince one that the ordinary sphere does not exhaust what there is. In the end, Sibley’s discussion of aesthetic judgements underlines the significance of the experiential over the conceptual. Religious parallels abound; for example, the intellectual study of world religions is profoundly different from a vital participation in their rituals, prayers, and sacraments. Otto’s term “numinous” refers to the divine as transcendent of rational thought; and whatever one cannot intellectually grasp is ineffable. Still, meanings that elude prose may succumb to the artistic language of poetry and symbolism.

In Chapter eleven, Arjuna’s profound spiritual awakening is, at once, aesthetic experience, for he encounters the aesthetic categories of the awesome and wondrous as Krishna appears with multiple eyes and limbs (xi, 10). Arjuna also experiences the sublime for he sees no beginning, middle or end to the boundless Lord (xi, 16). Earlier Krishna identifies himself with splendor as well as goodness (x, 36); here the key word *tejah* is variously translated as splendor, beauty, majesty, glory or another aesthetic term.

Paul Gauguin’s concern with fundamental questions about the human condition is evident in the title of a painting that he completed in 1897 and thought that he could never surpass: “Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?” In the tenth chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna proclaims that he is the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings (x, 20). Krishna is further identified with celestial beauties (x, 21). Since Krishna’s manifestations are endless (x, 19), he will disclose only his prominent ones to Arjuna. Thus it seems that even an omnipotent being cannot relate all of his infinite attributes to a finite being.

Yoga itself is aesthetic, because it is an art; and it is an art, because yoga is “skill in action” (ii, 50); and “skill in execution” is one of the primary meanings of art. Ethical action is closer to art than to science, for the moral life requires concentrated action; one’s emotions, intellect and will must all be invested, as in the case of art. Of course, the goal of yoga is to effect union, to unite with Brahman (xi, 27 and x, 7). Union between the human soul and God can involve the union of identity or the union of an I-Thou relation. Aesthetic experience also takes these two forms: one can either jump into a lake and merge with it or one can dualistically contemplate the water at a remove from it. Performed successively, the two acts are compatible. Perhaps this aesthetic model can reconcile the monistic and theistic strains of the *Gita*. On the one hand, a person who loses himself in Krishna is not himself, i.e., his ego, any longer; in a sense, he is Krishna, for he participates in the pure consciousness on the one

hand, just a moment later he propitiates, or prays to Krishna, thereby affirming an I-Thou relation between a human and the divine.

To unite with the other is to interpenetrate. Thus Krishna says, "... those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them."¹⁵ And Christ declares, "Abide in me as I abide in you . . . (John 15: 4-5 and 17:23)" Uniting with the art work also involves one in interpenetration. The music is in me—it resonates within me—and I am in the music—I flow with it. Just as Henry David Thoreau could discover his true self in nature, he speaks of discovering nature within himself. Discussing the signs of spring, he announces: "... there are as many within us as we think we hear without us."¹⁶ When the artist's insight into things breaks down barriers between the self and the other, interpenetration flourishes. Hence the Taoist painter proclaims: "the mountains are in me and I am in them." The same sort of interpenetration appears in the journal of the naturalist John Muir, "Now we are fairly into the mountains and they are into us . . . the boundary walls of our heavy flesh tabernacle seem taken down and we flow and diffuse into the very air and trees and streams and rocks . . . we are a part of nature now . . . How glorius a conversion . . ."¹⁷

The *Gita* poses two interesting aesthetic problems; the first I will simply mention and the second I will address. First: How can the visible beauties of nature proceed from the invisible or unmanifest (viii, 18)? Of course, this is an aesthetic version of the age-old question: How can the one become the many? A second puzzle may be more tractable. Suppose one withdraws his mind and senses from perceivable objects, as the turtle retracts its limbs (ii, 58). One wonders how aesthetic experience can flourish if he cuts off the avenues to it. The very detachment from the mundane that the *Gita* enjoins would seem to preclude aesthetic appreciation. The renouncing of sense data (xviii, 51 and vi, 4) is, however, compatible with the union of self-integration. Such union is always harmonious and a harmony is always aesthetic. Thus the *Gita* speaks of one achieving harmony (vi, 14). Ultimate peace or the peace that passes all understanding, like a serene lake, is beautiful, because it is undisturbed.

Presumably, in the bliss of *moksha* there would be no institutional religion, since the need for rituals and symbols would drop away. Thomas a Kempis states: "When what is perfect shall come, all use of the sacraments will cease, for they who are blessed in the heavenly glory have no need of this sacramental medicine."¹⁸ Perhaps traditional prayer, creeds, and commandments also become superfluous for any one who enjoys the beatific vision of God. But even if there is no practical need for sacraments, rituals, and prayers, they may endure because of their aesthetic value. Even if the institutions of art and religion are penultimate, surely aesthetic delight—which can be intuitive or conceptual rather than perceptual—and spiritual bliss would abide in *moksha* or any afterlife. Just as surely, the beauties of the beatific vision would endure as long

as beings continued to enjoy their spiritual natures. Art is a means to spiritual states of mind, but the resultant spiritual consciousness is itself aesthetic. Thus it would be a mistake to think that, in a peak state, one leaves the aesthetic behind. Whether or not one transcends art, remains an ongoing and essential aspect of spiritual consciousness. Wherever there is harmonious consciousness and wherever there is the delight of uniting with the other, the aesthetic is present. Moreover, the very goal of the *Gita* is aesthetic, for one aspires to obtain the highest aesthetic state, namely, peace (vi, 17).

To appreciate the *Gita* is to adopt the poet's attitude. In poetry one expects no single, fixed meaning; poems invite multiple interpretations— both / and prevails over either / or. It is in the highest intuition that all inconsistencies become reconciled in an ineffable experience. How can Krishna be both a particular, historical being as well as a universal God ? In the aesthetic vehicle of the *Gita*, he is both. Art presents the two; perhaps it even unites them.

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Metaphor and Truth in Nietzsche and Emerson: A Critique of Idealism and Realism

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Within the American philosophical tradition, certain thinkers have traced Ralph Waldo Emerson's historical influences and tendencies within continental and American thought. For example, Cornel West has linked pragmatism to what he calls Emersonian provocation, and Gray Stack has investigated Emersonian influences in Nietzsche's thought.¹ This Emersonian connection has appeared indirectly in Richard Rorty's thought through his exploration of Nietzschean linguistic insights within Quine and Davidson. While Nietzsche did not directly influence contemporary pragmatism, Rorty's idea is that the "contingency of language," the idea that language (thought) and reality do not correspond in any essential manner, has been in the air since the mid to late 19th century and is resurfacing in late 20th century pragmatism. This sense of the contingency of language arises in Emerson, who influenced Nietzsche. Thus, in both a direct and indirect manner, Emerson, has had an effect on thinkers who definitely are not transcendentalists.

Emerson's influence upon Nietzsche interests me. What I examine here is the link between Emerson and Nietzsche on truth and language. As much as Emerson is an idealist (transcendentalist), there is also an implicit critique of idealism, perhaps a deconstruction of it, rooted in his views of language and expressed best in his essay on the poet and in the chapter dealing with language in his text entitled *Nature*.² My argument is that Nietzsche is influenced by Emerson's unintentional critique of idealism and uses Emerson's insights into language to critique realism and bring the contingency of language into the foreground. Nietzsche offers his Emerson-inspired critique of realism in an early essay entitled "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense."³ In a sense, Emerson provoked Nietzsche. Emerson, in his provocative style, has brought idealism into question; Nietzsche, through his reading of Emerson, has brought realism into question.

That Emerson was influenced by German Idealism is well known. His self-acknowledged indebtedness to Kant in the essay "The Transcendentalist" testifies to his familiarity with German Philosophy. However, his Kantianism is not Kant's, but the Kant of Coleridge, Schiller and Schelling, particularly given Emerson's emphasis on beauty, poetry and spirit.

Early in his career, Emerson called his philosophy Idealism, the view that there is no existence without mind, or "seeing the world in God," as Emerson says (*Nature*, 36). In other words, nature is only directed toward spirit, which is both nature's source and *telos*. The idea of nature either as merely materialistic or as realistic is unsound to Emerson.

Emerson does recognize a material side to nature. Nature is there for our betterment: it is our commodity and there for us. But in addition, nature shows its truer sense in beauty. We take "delight" in the "perception of natural forms" (*Nature*, 10), but the recognition of beauty is the revelation of beauty in nature. In other words, nature's ideality shows itself through its beauty. Emerson presents a Platonistic (not Platonic) idea of eros as the desire of the beautiful, of what is whole and harmonious, that moves us out of our absorption with natural things and directs us toward spirit.

The movement out of natural absorption and toward spirit can occur in three ways. First, the delight in nature's beauty is a movement away from content to form. On this point Emerson seems to be in agreement with the Kantian sense of disinterest as a move away from a natural thing's objective qualities or use toward a delight taken in the way the form gives pleasure. However, Emerson interprets the pleasure taken in the natural thing's form as suggestive of a realm of spirit beyond nature. Humans need disinterested satisfaction to find repose and meaning beyond the drudgery of everyday material existence. In other words, the delight in beauty lifts us out of our mundanness.

Second, given this heightening effect, natural beauty exposes the human being's moral destination. On the one hand, the recognition of spirit in nature's beauty makes us aware that nature is our property and is there to serve us. On the other hand the recognition of spirit in nature's beauty ought to lift us beyond our everyday immersion and reveal to us our moral destination. Emerson does not really explain this process, but I take it that the exposure of nature's service to us makes us aware of a sense of duty and our need to become great souls.

Third, beauty has an intellectual quality. Beauty reveals order in nature, and it stimulates the intellect to search for "the absolute order of things" (*Nature*, 14). Further, beauty is productive of ideas, hence the intellect does not merely want to contemplate nature but wants to give rise to a "new creation" (*Nature*, 14). Thus, beauty uncovers a rational order within nature.

Given these views, both the poet and the philosopher occupy a place of preeminence in Emerson's thought, since both expose nature's beauty and its spirituality, *i.e.*, its movement toward the divine. Both the poet and philosopher "postpone the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought" (*Nature*, 33). Their difference lies in their *telos*: the poet is directed specifically toward beauty, and the philosopher is directed toward truth. However, we must keep in mind that the good, the true and the beautiful are merely "different faces of the same All" (*Nature*, 15).

Nonetheless, Emerson tends to emphasize beauty over the other two primary ideas. This emphasis is possibly due to Schelling's influence gained through Coleridge. As Emerson says, "Beauty is the creator of the universe" (*Poet*, 67). If beauty gains a certain preeminence as the highest idea of the primary ideas, then the poet gains a certain prestige as the spokesperson of beauty. Emerson claims that the poet is "the Sayer, the namer, and represents beauty" (*Poet*, 67).

Emerson's analysis of the poet is interesting but strange. Emerson refers to God as a poet and claims that "poetry was all written before time was" (*Poet*, 67). This makes sense given Emerson's idea of beauty as a creator. Since Emerson sees poetry as the highest art, God would be a poet, the highest mode of the artist. If God is a poet, then the earthly poet can merely tap into the already present oversoul or spirit of the world and says, or names, what is given there. However, Emerson claims that the poet generates original thought. She/he opens up experience in new ways and reveals things in ways that have not been seen before. As Emerson says, the task of the poet is to "articulate" a world that is already open to mind, to make us realize that nature is a symbol of beauty, to interpret the symbols as thoughts of the spirit and to make us recognize that we are "symbols and inhabit symbols" (*Poet*, 72). By doing so, the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession. For through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and sees the flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form; and, following with his eyes the life, uses the forms which express that life, and so his speech flows with flowing of nature (*Poet*, 73).

Thus, on the one hand, the poet is an interpreter; on the other hand, the poet is an originator. As such, the poet is a "Language-maker" (*Poet*, 73).⁴

Since language is the way we articulate thought, or ideas, we must recognize that all language is originally poetry, since we come to know ourselves and nature in its spirituality through the naming activity. Language is "fossil poetry," a "tomb of the muses," that is "made up of images, or tropes, which now in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their origin" (*Poet*, 73). The poet wakes us up, moves us out of our forgetfulness, compels us to recollect our spirituality and moves us beyond commodity relations toward beauty.

Given this, in Emerson's explicit discussion of language a problem arises regarding the notion of symbol. In the section on language in the text *Nature*, Emerson wants to show three things: first, that "words are signs of natural facts;" second, that "particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts;" and third, that "nature is the symbol of spirit" (*Nature*, 15). These contentions show Emerson's view of language to be very traditional and idealistic.

Language is a natural activity, and words are merely signs that signify natural things. Moreover, Emerson suggests that the words are essentially connected to the things they signify, i.e., words allow things to show themselves in their being. In all likelihood, Emerson derives his view of language partially from the Bible and the Adamic vocation of naming things and partially from a Platonistic theory of naming.⁵ Both views tie well into the idea of the poet as the one who reveals and creates the essence of things through the act of naming. However, Emerson ignores the fact that different names arise in different languages for the same thing and that words have an arbitrary character. In other words, Emerson is not a nominalist.

Nonetheless, Emerson does note that words that signify natural facts are used to symbolize spiritual things. In fact, all language production is rooted in nature. Simple etymological practice shows this fact. As Emerson says,

right means straight; wrong means twisted; Spirit primarily means wind; transgression, the crossing of a line; supercilious, the raising of the eyebrow and emotion. We say the heart to express emotion, the head to denote thought, and thought and emotion are words borrowed from sensible things, and now appropriated to spiritual nature" (*Nature*, 15-16).

We are not sure how the transference from natural things to spiritual things transpires, but Nietzsche notes in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that this is a well-accepted philological rule. So, on the one hand words come to stand for, or symbolize, spiritual things.⁶

According to Emerson, words can symbolize spiritual things because nature is itself only a symbol of spirit. Hence we have an image/original schema at work here. The spiritual world is the original world, while nature is a symbol, or image, of spirit. Natural things are images of spirit, and words are symbols, or metaphors, or sound images of natural things that can symbolize spirit. Some of Emerson's examples are that "an enraged man is a lion," "a cunning man is a fox," "a lamb is innocence" and a "a snake is subtle spite" (*Nature*, 16). We also use the image of light for knowledge and goodness, while we use the image of dark for ignorance and evil.

These metaphors express more than analogies. For Emerson, we are not merely stating likenesses; we are expressing truth. Emerson suggests that there are proper connections between thought and symbol, a correspondence theory of metaphors that we can tap into if our spirits are pure, simple and uncorrupted. In other words, Emerson's connection is that nature copies a spiritual original and that nature is itself an image of spirit.

So far, what Emerson has said follows the tenets of a type of idealism or Platonism. However, this position needs to be pushed to its limits. According to Emerson, I am first exposed to nature and learn words (concepts) for the things I encounter. So, I use words that originate in natural things that come to

symbolize spiritual things. However, nature is itself only symbolic of spirit, and hence, words are metaphors, I can only know spirit metaphorically. Spirit is said to exist and to be original, but we know it only as symbol. So nature is only a symbol of spirit, which we know through language, which is itself natural and symbolic, and hence what we possess of spirit is metaphor.

This linguistic play reduces everything to the level of metaphor, and what we end up with are metaphors of metaphors. Words and nature are merely symbolic of spirit, and all we know of spirit is itself metaphorical. This metaphorical process eradicates the image/original schema in a Platonistic theory, since Platonism sees symbol and metaphor in terms of images and hence as non-original. This sense of the metaphorical gets more convoluted when we add the realization that there is no necessary connection between a thing and its sound image, or word, which Emerson ignores given his non-nominalistic stance.

Given this, what Emerson has revealed is the non-foundational character of idealism. Stack reads this emergence of the non-foundational character of idealism in a different way. He calls Emerson's thought a "realistic idealism" (Stack, 74), which I take Stack to mean that Emerson recognizes the harshness and particularity of nature, while simultaneously stressing the reality of spirit. However, Emerson believes in the reality of the universals, and to expose the metaphorical character of universals is to undermine idealism, no matter how realistic you want to make it. Emerson has brought idealism to its limits, and, by doing so, has brought the image/original schema into question. What Emerson has done amounts to a deconstruction of idealism, and, contrary to his intention, opened the door to a type of nonidealism.⁷

I believe that it is these so-called deconstructive elements that attract Nietzsche to Emerson, and I think Nietzsche would depict them as modes of *Redlichkeit* (intellectual honesty) in Emerson. This particular deconstructive element regarding language appears in Nietzsche's essay, "Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense."

Stack notes that Nietzsche read the book *Nature* very carefully. In fact, in Nietzsche's German edition of *Nature*, he underlined a passage from the section dealing with language. The passage in English reads, "There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms" (Stack, 72; *Nature*, 21). Stack interprets this emphasis as Nietzsche's attempt to find out how spirit discloses itself immanently, not transcendently, in nature. However, Stack's interpretation remains too much within the confines of idealism and makes Nietzsche seem like Hegel. Already in "Truth and Lies," Nietzsche cites his mistrust of idealism (TL, 87).

Given Nietzsche's reflections on language in "Truth and Lies," I would say that Nietzsche comes to the realization that there is neither an otherworldly spirit nor an innerworldly spirit, if we mean by spirit some overarching rational

force such as the Oversoul or God, as Emerson intends it. Instead, Nietzsche realizes that truth is metaphorical. But how does he come to this realization?

Nietzsche's main question in "Truth and Lies" is: where does our "drive for truth" originate (*TL*, 80)? In an environment given over to idealism, as Germany was during Nietzsche's time, the question concerning the origin of the drive for truth was strange for two reasons. First, the question does not ask about the origin of truth in and of itself. Instead, the question directs us to seek out a drive that gives rise to truth. In other words, the implication is that truth is not merely present; it is not there to be picked up and taken in by our cognitive faculties. Second, the question is strange because it suggests that truth is not original but is derivative and hence is needed for a reason other than the truth. However, the question was being raised in England by utilitarians, empiricist and Darwinists, those whom Nietzsche refers to as the English psychologists.

Nietzsche's essay begins with a discussion of the intellect's hubris, purpose and function, and then continues with the social/moral origin of truth. Let me condense these discussions, but keep in mind that these discussions are merely preludes to the non-moral origin of the drive for truth, which is Nietzsche's real concern. Nietzsche begins "Truth and Lies" with a fairy tale, in the style of the Grimm brothers, well-known philologists, about the human being's hubristic assessment of his/her intellect. The fairy tale is:

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of the universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed and the clever beasts had to die (*TL*, 79).

The point of the fairy tale is to show "how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature," even though we think that we are the center of the universe (*TL*, 79).

For Nietzsche, the intellect is human, all too human, and has no transcendent purpose. The only purpose Nietzsche ascribes to the intellect is one of individual survival, and he states that the intellect's primary function is one of "dissimulation" (*TL*, 80). The human being is physically too weak to survive in the wild, and so the intellect evolved to the point where humans were able to survive by laying traps for animals, hiding in ambush and waiting for the food to come to us, and probably stealing from others. While some other animals practice some sense of dissimulation, as members of the cat family do, Nietzsche claims that "the art of dissimulation reaches its peak" in us (*TL*, 80).

Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind

convention, playing a role for others and for oneself — in short, a continuous fluttering around the *solitary* flame of vanity — is so much the rule among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them (TL, 80). So, given our hubris and dissimulation, where does the drive for truth come from?

In a brief social/moral history of truth, Nietzsche shows that truth arises out of our desire to interact socially and to live peacefully. According to Nietzsche, for peaceful social interaction to occur, a fixed legislative order has to be created that shows what is permissible and what is forbidden. The way this is accomplished is to designate what these are, and these designations come to stand for the truth. As Nietzsche says, “a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth” (TL, 81).

On the social/moral level, truth is not distinguished from falsity, *i.e.*, truth is not a matter of knowledge *per se*. Instead, truth is contrasted with lies. The purpose of truth on the social/moral level is to fix the way things are in language such that we can coexist peacefully and in an orderly fashion. The liar is the one who can take the fixed conventions and dissimulate with them in order to achieve power. Thus, the liar becomes destructive of the social order. In early social orders, the liar would be either killed or exiled, if he/she were caught. Otherwise, he/she would gain power for his/her own advantage through the ability to dissimulate. The Greek sense of sophistry, in its negative aspects, fits the description of the liar.

However, the social origin is not the origin of the drive for truth for Nietzsche. The legislation of language is itself a social convention and hence arbitrary. Further, as Nietzsche is wont to say, the truth is not always pretty, and we have a tendency to turn away from truths that are repugnant and harmful to the social order we have created, and to accept only those that are beneficial to us. So the question still remains: Whence the origin of the drive for truth?

Given the discussion of the legislative function of language, Nietzsche notes that language and concepts, which are both conventions, are never “the adequate expression of all realities,” and only our “forgetfulness” would ever make us think that the correspondence between the intellect and reality is adequate (TL, 81). To show this inadequacy, Nietzsche examines a basic model of perception and language creation to make his point. Let us use sight as the example. In order for the intellect to generate a visual image (*Blid*), light (electro-magnetic radiation) must reflect off some object ‘X’, enter the eye and strike the optic nerve. Supposedly, this process causes chemical changes in the retinal cells, which causes electrical currents to shoot up the optic nerve into the brain, which causes a visual image to appear. Then, for no real casual reason, a sound is linked to the visual image.

This model of perception leads to the idea that there is no such thing as correct perception, if by correct perception we mean "the adequate expression of an object in the subject" (*TL*, 86).⁸ Different entities with different nervous systems, light receptacles and optic nerves would perceive the world differently; and changes in our nervous system, light receptacle and optic nerve would change the way we perceive the world. To say one way of perceiving is correct and the other is wrong is indefensible for Nietzsche. In order to decide whose mode of perception is the correct one, a criterion of correct perception would have to proceed the actual act of perceiving, and this criterion "is not available" according to Nietzsche (*TL*, 86).

Nietzsche's interpretation of the perceptual process is that "a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn is imitated in a sound: second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overlapping of one sphere right into the middle of an entirely new and different one" (*TL*, 82). The movement between nerve stimulus, visual image and sound is a transference or transposition (which is what meta-phora literally means) between unrelated areas. A visual image stands in for the nerve stimulus, and the two are not the same, and a sound, which we come to call a word, comes to represent the visual image, and again the two are not the same. What we are doing is forming metaphors. By extension, the same metaphorical process would occur for any sensible phenomena.⁹

Regarding concept formation, Nietzsche notes that the word, or sound given to the singular thing, "instantly becomes a concept" by "arbitrarily discarding the individual differences" and making the word fit "more or less similar cases" (*TL*, 83). In other words, the word is made into an "equation of unequal things," given that the perceptions of the thing would be unique each time (*TL*, 83). So we forget the singularity of the experiences, and in our forgetfulness come to think that such things as concepts or universals exist. But as the empiricistic model of perception shows, there is no essence existing separately from the existent. In fact, there is no essence at all, and the concept shows itself as a highly reified metaphor.

If there is no correct perception, and if concepts are only nominalistic, then what is truth? According to Nietzsche, truth is :

A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions, which we have forgotten are illusions, they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (*TL*, 84). I always thought the subtitle to "Truth and Lies" ought to be "On the Consequences of Nominalism."

Whence the drive for truth? The drive for truth is rooted in "the drive toward the formation of metaphors," which Nietzsche considers to be "*the fundamental* (my emphasis) human drive" (TL, 88). If we consider eradicate this drive, we would eradicate human being. In the drive toward the formation of metaphors, what we do is make the world analogous to ourselves. We believe the world is as we perceive it and name it, but this is an unfounded belief. Instead, in making the world analogous to ourselves. Nietzsche contends that we show ourselves primarily as artists and not as knowers, since science, both the social sciences and what Thomas Kuhn would call normal science, only functions with reified metaphors.¹⁰ In other words, an aesthetic impulse compels us to make the world be like we are, i.e., compels us to make the world in our own image (little gods that we think we are).

If this aesthetic impulse makes us how we are, why do the vast majority of people conceal or forget this fundamental drive form metaphors from ourselves? If you recall the moral/social origin of truth, the fixed conventions rooted in the legislation of language allow us to live more securely than we could do otherwise. So the concealment or forgetfulness is a survival response that allows us to live with "repose, security and consistency" (TL, 86). In other words, the forgetfulness is a need of the herd. Nietzsche also contends that the forgetfulness gives rise to a sense of self-consciousness, which he understands in a Kantian sense as the ability of the self to grasp the conditions of the possibility of experience and not as a mere awareness of one's awareness of the world. Such a self-conscious posture is unfounded in Nietzsche's view because it too is merely a metaphor fixed by the herd to give itself a sense that the intellect can escape its confines and transcend its limitations.

So what I have between me and the object 'X' "is at most an aesthetic relation" (TL, 86). Herein lies the challenge to realism. Nietzsche does not deny that there is an object 'X' that we perceive. What he denies is that we have any privileged access to it through perception and that our basic stance to the world is aesthetic and rooted in metaphor formation. In a sense, Nietzsche does not merely offer a critique of realism; he offers a deconstruction of it by showing that the primacy of epistemology granted in the sciences is rooted in an aesthetic impulse.¹¹ (A sense of free play is prior to determination).

Given Nietzsche's analysis, the influences of Emerson ought to be obvious. First, Emerson exposed the drive toward the formation of metaphors when he exposed the metaphorical underpinnings of idealism, only Nietzsche exposes the drive toward metaphor in realism. Second, Emerson's understanding of language as fossil poetry is repeated in Nietzsche's idea of conceptualization as reified metaphor that has lost its power to enchant and stimulate. Third, Emerson's idea of the poet as namer and creator appears in Nietzsche's idea of the human drive toward metaphor formation. However, Nietzsche understands

this as the basic human drive hence everyone can be a poet. Nietzsche's insight is in line with Emerson's views, since Emerson wanted Americans to become creators. Fourth, the primacy of the aesthetic in Emerson is appropriated by Nietzsche and shown to be connected to the fundamental drive. In a way similar to Emerson, Nietzsche sees the need to create new myths and metaphors to counteract the nihilism of the world and to wake us up to other possibilities (TL, 89). As Nietzsche suggests, there is a difference between the illusions in a mythically-inspired world, similar to the ones of the Ancient Greeks, where "the waking life" resembles a dream and where "anything is possible at each moment," and the illusions of "the waking of a scientifically disenchanted thinker" which forgets its own illusions (TL, 89).

To conclude, on the one hand, Emerson, the transcendentalist, and Nietzsche, the active nihilist as he called himself later, are far apart. On the other hand, Nietzsche is the German Emerson who calls people out of their passive nihilism to a sense of self-reliance.¹²

Notes and References

1. George Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1992). Stack has noticed the influences of Emerson's writing on language and metaphor in Emerson's text *Nature* and Nietzsche's early writings on truth and metaphor. Stack sees Emerson's view of language as proto-structuralist or as anticipatory of "later semiotic theory" (Stack, 145, explain from Stack). Nonetheless, "[N]atural facts symbolize spiritual facts and spiritual facts are represented by natural symbol." (Stack, 145) My question: What are "Spiritual facts". ?
2. I have used the following editions of Ralph Waldo Emerson's works. *Emerson on Transcendentalism* (NY : Ungar Publishing Co., 1980). This text is where the book *Nature* is found, and I refer to the text as *Nature* in the notes and citations, *Self-reliance and Other Essays* (NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993). I use the essay entitled "The Poet" from this text, and I refer to the text as *Poet* in the notes and citations.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, "on the Truth and Lies in a normal Sense, " *Philosophy and Truth : Selections from Nietzsche's Note-books of the early 1870's*, by Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1979). I refer to the essay as TL in the notes and citations.
4. George Stack's idea is that Emerson sees a transformation of the natural into the spiritual through symbol or metaphor — the natural becomes human and nature is "a metaphor of the human mind" (Stack, 146). Probably it is more than human in Emerson, considering his reflections on the Oversoul, but I do take it that the idea here is that symbolizing humanizes nature or spiritualizes it and that we are to find spirit in nature (Stack, 72).
5. I would not doubt that Emerson saw his transcendentalism in a theological manner as a way to overcome the dispersion of languages at Babel.
6. Nietzsche is critical of anything like spiritual facts. It is not that the spiritual facts exist, but that we treat the material in a way that regards it as non-material. But this is our creation and not caused by something otherworldly.

7. Stack says "the idealism of Emerson and Nietzsche is not otherworldly, but an immanent idealism of valuation" and he sees Emerson inverting Platonic hierarchical values (*Stack*, 20). My question is: What is immanent idealism? I say there is no such thing. They are both critiquing or deconstructing idealism.

8. This opens the issue of subjects/object dichotomy — neither one nor the other has a privilege, since the split is rooted in empiricism and idealism, which are being questioned. What we have is a breakdown of the image/original opposition, which breaks down under the view of language expressed by Emerson and Nietzsche.

9. Stack points out that Nietzsche shows the metaphorical character of ordinary language (*Stack*, 148).

10. I believe that Nietzsche would understand Kuhn's sense of extraordinary science as involved in the drive towards the formation of metaphors.

11. Emerson "deconstructs" the notion of truth, and Nietzsche sees that metaphor is neither correspondence nor spiritual transformation but that truth is metaphor. Emerson undermines his own spirituality or transcendentalism or idealism, which is what I think Nietzsche admired. Nietzsche is critiquing the claims of universality and exposing a certain historicism regarding truth. Nietzsche sees truth as rooted in forgetfulness. Nietzsche employs his critique in relationship to empiricism, not idealism. What Emerson reveals is that the spiritual is only known through metaphor but he makes the spiritual more real than the natural. This undermines truth and places everything on the level of the metaphorical, which should bring into question the meaning of metaphor. A supposed truth is only revealed metaphorically.

12. A certain pragmatic tendency emerges in Nietzsche. To develop this further, I need to examine Rorty and Davidson.

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Concerning the Material and the Spiritual in Russian Modernism : Notes on the Icon, *Faktura*, and Self-Sufficiency

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The dichotomy of the spiritual and material pervades much of the discourse of the Russian avant-garde, whether in the polemics between Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich or Aleksandr Rodchenko and Vassilii Kandinskii's debates at the Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK). I will address this apparent antimony through the juxtaposition of the icon, *faktura* and the "self-sufficient" work of art as significant nexuses of the material and spiritual in avant-garde practice. A corollary theme of this essay will be the relationship of these concerns to the Russian avant-garde's discovery and appropriation of Cubism. Reference will also be made to related developments in Russian Futurist literature and Formalist textual criticism. Through this analysis a new model of the spiritual and material should emerge; one that will illustrate the dialogical and mutually inferential nature of these properties. I hope thereby to undermine the oppositional binarism of these concepts, while also suggesting alternative approaches to this quintessential theme of avant-garde practice.

The icon has been cited as the inspiration for works as divergent as Aleksandr Gerasimov's portraits of Stalin and Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*. It haunted the officially atheist culture of the Soviet Union and has cast long shadows over much of twentieth century art. In Soviet scholarship the status of the icon was never firmly established; at times it was considered an expression of genuine popular art, and at others as a token of obscurantist mysticism.¹ In the West and in recent post-Soviet criticism the icon has been described most often as the preeminent manifestation of "the sacral" and a bridge from the realm of medieval ritual objects to the contemporary status of fine art as, in the words of Rosalind Krauss, a kind of "secular form of belief"². Yet, the icon's direct influence on artists such as Malevich and Kandinskii has been a source of discomfort in some critical circles. A discomfort that Krauss ascribes to a contemporary intellectual environment in which "...it is indescribably embarrassing to mention art and spirit in the same sentence."³ As the exhibition

"The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting: 1890-1985" has demonstrated, despite certain formal continuities, the messianic spiritual quests of Modernist seers like Kandinsky and Mondrian seem remote from the ethos of Post-Modernism.

Even in thoughtful accounts of the Russian avant-garde the icon seems to have suffered a measure of critical silence due to its denomination as a precursor of the spiritualized art of High Modernism. A number of significant studies of surface (*faktura*) and self-sufficiency in the art of Malevich and his contemporaries, such as Donald Judd's "Malevich: Independent Form, Color, Surface," "Yve-Alain Bois' "Malevich, le carre, le degre zero," Rainer Crone and David Moos' *Kazimir Malevich: The Climax of Disclosure* and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's "From *Faktura* to Factography," are indicative of this tendency.⁴ Each of these accounts presents valuable insights, yet the authors avoid substantive discussion of the icon. It is ignored by Judd. Bois mentions it only in passing and Crone rarely discusses the icon throughout a large monograph. To his credit Buchloh briefly discusses the implications of the icon for the avant-garde, but he then asserts, "any references to specifically Russian or religious functions are too rapidly jettisoned to maintain [their] credibility."⁵ In other words, the omissions in the texts of Judd, Bois and Crone, as well as this dismissal in Buchloh's narrative seem to exhibit an "anxiety of influence" regarding the icon. Perhaps these commentators, like the audience posited by Krauss, found the icon's "religious functions" and the concomitant discussion of art and spirit which they would entail, to be incompatible with their own critical discourses.

A number of appraisals of the Russian avant-garde have addressed icon painting⁶. Margaret Betz' programmatic article "The Icon and Russian Modernism" illustrates the understanding of the icon as the spiritualized art of which Krauss spoke⁷. Betz shares none of Buchloh's reticence to ponder the "religio-transcendental functions" underlying the relationship of icons and the Modernist project. Instead, she concludes: "Here, rising from the grave — as the Last Judgment — was the beacon of a new, transfigured life. There can be no doubt that Russian artists of the avant-garde looked to it [the icon] for inspiration, as the true sign that a new life was about to begin."⁸ Betz exhibits little embarrassment in linking spirit or religious functions to art in her narrative. Unlike Bois, Crone and Buchloh, she pursues the import of the icon in Russian Modernist culture, yet she simultaneously becomes enmeshed in a reductive discursive trap which the others eschew. Betz construes the icon as a mere cipher for an overtly spiritual and eminently religious weltanschauung, thereby implicating the avant-garde in an unambiguously spiritual and quasi-religious undertaking.

Betz' emphasis upon the role of the icon in the development of the aesthetics of the Russian avant-garde is well placed. However, I would propose that the icon also functioned outside the circumscribed realm of the spiritual

and religious evoked in Betz's article. In this respect a discursive approach more consonant with that of Buchloh would better elucidate the icon's role in the artistic practice of the Russian avant-garde. Buchloh quite rightly rejects an interpretation of the icon which posits "religio-transcendental function" as the crux of the avant-garde's interest in *faktura*. The difficulty with Buchloh's admonition lies in his acceptance (like Betz) of the premise that the icon was an object inextricably bound to spirit and religion. Instead, an alternative model of the icon would take into account the image's material existence and its eminently earthly embodiment as an amalgam of wood, oil, gold leaf and metal. Through this examination it becomes clear that the icon serves not only as a paradigm for the great spiritual art of the Russian and European avant-garde (e.g., Kandinskii and Malevich) but also as a model for the materialist interests of Tatlin and the Constructivists.

Interest in the icon began to increase at the close of the previous century. However, only with Serge Diaghiev's exhibition at the *Salon d'Automne* of 1906 was the icon definitively thrust into the realm of art. In the following years interest in the icon grew as artists such as Malevich, Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov began to adopt compositional devices derived from its colorful, rhythmic design. Finally, with the celebration of the Romanov tercentenary in 1913 a large number of icons were cleaned and restored. With this rediscovery came a flood of publications devoted to the icon, including numerous articles in the art journal *Apollon*, the writings of the philosopher Pavel Florenskii and the lectures of the scholar V.F. Grineizin.⁹ However, Evgenii Trubetskoi's "Icons: Theology in Colors" (1915) and the Futurist artist-theorist Waldemars Matvejs's (known under the pseudonym Vladimir Markov) "Principles of Creation in the Plastic Arts" (1914) will serve as my paradigms of two divergent approaches to the legacy of the icon in Russian culture.¹⁰ For Trubetskoi, the icon is a specifically spiritual creation, while Markov emphasizes the "material" of the icon and its resemblance to contemporaneous art.

At the turn of the century the icon occupied a highly ambiguous cultural space. Certainly the most readily apparent feature of the icon was its function as a cult object. The icon continued to serve throughout the Orthodox world as an object of ritualized veneration and as a "portal between the heavenly and the worldly" in the words of Trubetskoi.¹¹ Perhaps most important the icon also provided viewers with a material manifestation of the contemplation of the divine and all that was incorporeal, holy and cosmic. These are the connotations that Kazimir Malevich clearly had in mind when he declared the *Black Square* to be "the icon of our time."¹² For Malevich the icon presented the ultimate expression of the contemplation of the spiritual and an invaluable source for the awakening of a new cosmic consciousness. A similar interest in the innate spirituality, imagery, colors and morphology of the icon appear in Kandinskii's art. Likewise,

in Kandinskii's seminal treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911) the artist sets forth a model for a "spiritual" artistic practice that repeatedly harkens back to the geometric stylization, surface rhythm and sensual primary colors of the icon.¹³

Though the icon's role as a cult object endowed it with a certain auratic, ritual value, there are other aspects of the icon which must be called into question. For almost all Russians at the turn of the century the icon was not considered to be a work of art at all.¹⁴ This is usually understood to mean that the icon was an object of veneration and thus elevated above the status of the mere work of art. Part of the "non-art" status of the icon surely resulted from its abjuration of resemblance and illusionism. As early as the seventeenth century this issue came to a head in the Orthodox Church when the conservative clergyman Protopop Avvakum declared, "one must never paint icons to resemble real humans."¹⁵ In fact, resistance to naturalism in the icon was one of the underlying reasons for the schism in the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁶ For the believer the icon was intended principally as the material embodiment of contemplation, not as a representation of the world. Through its inverse perspective, rigid geometric design and bright non-local colors the icon strove to create a surface that was valuable on its own terms, not as a mechanism for mimetic reproduction. Iconologist Leonid Ouspenskii has remarked that the icon was the product of a highly developed ordering of materials.¹⁷ It was encased in metal coverings (*rizas*) and generally obscured by many layers of dirt and grime. In this context one may refer to Walter Benjamin's observation that cult objects, unlike objects d'art, do not derive their value from exhibition. "...what mattered was their existence, not their being on view."¹⁸ And, in fact, icons were not displayed so as to be seen but to impress through their mere presence. Such details further underscore the icon's special status outside the loci of modern art.

The icon also complicates Benjamin's description of the cult object. The critic emphasizes the modern era of "exhibition" as a locus for reproduction, seriality and growing alienation from the aura of the producer. Strangely, the icon embodies several of these quintessentially modern characteristics. A given icon was intended to be reproduced (manually, not mechanically) with a minimal degree of variation from one artist to the next. In fact, detailed handbooks for icon painters (*podlinniki*) were created so as to prescribe not only what could be depicted, but also how an icon could be created.¹⁹ The individuality of the icon painter was to be utterly removed from the process of production, so that the final image would embody a collective idea (*sobornost*) rather than that of an individual. In this respect the authenticity and auratic component of the icon has always been problematic.

The quotidian usage of the icon also differs from that of the cult object. The icon did not merely hang on the wall to be venerated and contemplated. On

the contrary, it would frequently be used to aid the sick, to bless homes and to greet visitors. Then, when an icon would become too decrepit it was "...sometimes discarded as trash. The usual place for discarded icons was the belfry, where they were exposed to the weather and often to *pigeons*." ²⁰ For the Russian peasant (as well as the monk and priest) the icon was almost a kind of utilitarian object that, after losing its presumed hieratic powers, could simply be discarded. It is also interesting to note that the icon in the peasant's hut most often did not hang on the wall — only proper pictures would hang there. More often the icon would rest on a ledge in the corner, propped against the wall. This detail of placement indicates quite concretely that the icon occupied a position differentiated both psychologically and physically from "real art." ²¹

The spirituality of the icon and its concomitant echoes of the cult object were crucial for the Russian avant-garde, but no less significant is the "non-art" status of the icon, as well as the icon's attention to design, materials and use-value. The icon may be viewed as a vehicle for spiritual transport and religio-transcendental functions but it was also a source for the investigation of materials and construction taken up in earnest by artists such as Tatlin and Rodchenko. In his essay "The Principles of Creation in the Plastic Arts" Vladimir Markov downplays the icon's spiritual connotations, underscoring instead its material existence: "let us remember icons: they are embellished with metal casings and haloes, fringes and incrustations... the material world is introduced into [their] creation only by means of the assemblage and application of real, tangible objects." ²² Markov further claims that the icon leads a dual existence "between two worlds" as both a spiritual art form and a particular organization of earthly materials. The critic emphasizes the icon's use not only as a portal for communion between God and the believer but also as an autonomous assemblage of presumably theurgic elements. This material, whether pigments, wood or gold leaf, derives its power not from the emulation reality but from the accentuation of its own autonomous existence. Moreover, the display and use of the icon demonstrated its distinct lineage from theretofore accepted works of art. With this in mind, I propose a genealogy of the icon that would take into account the symbiotic relationship of Trubetskoi's evocative description of the otherworldly spirituality of icon's and Markov's celebration of the icon's preeminent concern for materials and *faktura*.

At this point it may be appropriate to define the term *faktura* more concretely. The art historian Charlotte Douglas suggests that *faktura* be viewed as "the feel of a material." ²³ The arresting facet of her description is its reliance upon another sense to explain a visual phenomenon. We find similar locutions in Markov's discussion of *faktura* as "the sound of paint" and in Nikolai Tarabukin's equation of "color, sounds and words." ²⁴ But, as Buchloh notes, these references to a plurality of senses do not betoken a return to Romantic aesthetics and the synaesthesia of Kupka and Kandinskii. ²⁵ Instead, it suggests

the Russian avant-garde's interest in the importance of the material aspects of objects and their sensory reception by the viewer or hearer. This interest will be manifest in the concern for *faktura* and a broader interest in the individual properties of each art. This presents one of the chief anomalies of the avant-garde in that its synthetic aspirations are frequently cited, though critics less frequently mention the artists' equally intense search for the essence of each individual art.²⁶ In Malevich's Suprematist canvases or Khlebnikov's *zaum* poetry the artist and poet sought to disentangle each medium from contamination with the other. These efforts are denominated by the Russian neologisms *zhivopisnost'* (painterliness) and *literaturnost'* (literariness). The goal was to free the painter from literary devices and the poet from descriptive conventions so that a "pure" work of art would emerge.²⁷ In this context the concept of *faktura* served as a kind of "empty signifier" describing whatever might be unique to a given material, be it the constituent elements of painting, poetry or sculpture.

Just as the question of *faktura* and its relationship to the icon occupied avant-garde painters, the relationship of the *faktura* of the word and ecclesiastical or glossolalic speech repeatedly appears in the programmatic pamphlets of the Russian Futurist poets, Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. In these tracts the poets attempt to analyze the significance of speech which defies the descriptive conventions of language, as in the ecstatic exclamations of the religious sectarians or *Khlysty* and Orthodox prayers spoken in Old Church Slavonic. In both cases the authors attempt to find a systematic means of understanding the signifying process of apparently unintelligible languages. From these discussions emerged the formulation of the tenets of "*zaum* language" (or transrational language—literally *zaum* means "beyond the mind"). Some have taken *zaum* to mean "irrational" but more accurately it expresses a new kind of rationalism; only a kind not accessible at the moment but one that will be in the future.²⁸ Unfortunately, Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh's conceptions of *zaum* are often treated as synonymous entities when they are quite distinct. In Kruchenykh's *zaum* the sounds should be entirely free from any referent. In other words, the sounds are intended as empty signifiers without any currently known signified. A famous example is the poem "Dyr. bul shs Cheryl" in which there are no readily available semantic clues. Thus, Kruchenykh accepted Ferdinand Saussure's distinction between the conventional relationship between signifier and signified. However, he believed that the signified was simply inaccessible at the moment of speech not merely the token of a conventional relationship.²⁹ Furthermore, Kruchenykh rejected the use of onomatopoeia as in Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Futurist poems and in Dada works such as Hugo Ball's "Karawane."

Unlike these approaches to poetic language, Khlebnikov never abandoned his conviction in the intimate connection between sound and preternatural meaning. His experiments were emphatically dissimilar from those of Kruchenykh in this sphere. He insisted that the sounds forming a word were

not conventional but integral. Khlebnikov spent many years studying the roots of Russian and Slavic words and concluded that there were rational explanations for the bonds between sound and meaning.³⁰ He wrote in "On the Simple Names of Language" that words follow patterns of formation according to their material qualities (i.e., the constituent sounds in individual words),³¹ while in "Analyzing the Word" he underscores the *faktura* of different sounds and their diachronic development in the Russian language.³² For Khlebnikov the entire face of language was not arbitrary and no sound could really be devoid of meaning because all sounds contain at least a shade of preexisting signification. These conclusions were of great significance for Khlebnikov and his circle because they pointed towards a model of language (or artistic practice) which could be meaningful but not denotative or descriptive. Khlebnikov concluded that the most instructive examples of a language which was simultaneously meaningful and non-representational were the utterances found in prayers, glossolalia and spells.

In a particularly instructive passage Khlebnikov declares: "The prayers of many peoples are written in a language incomprehensible to those who pray. Does the Hindu really understand the Vedas? Old Church Slavonic is incomprehensible to the Russian. Latin—to the Pole and Czech."³³ Here semiotic systems linked to religion (e.g., ecclesiastical speech and shamanist chants) seem to naturally lend themselves to an emphasis upon the *faktura* of language. This accentuation of *faktura* takes place because the language of prayers or spells is not to be understood by the rational processes of the mind. In prayers the hearer perceives the material of language not as the intermediary for description but as an expression of the otherwise obscured inherent relationship between sounds and their subtle connotations. Khlebnikov praised such speech as the epitome of "language as such" and the model for his own *zaum* experiments. If we return to Markov's description of the icon we find a number of similarities between his description of the *faktura* of the icon and Khlebnikov's interest in the *faktura* of the prayer. Both critic and poet invoke an ecclesiastical lexicon not for its semantic import (i.e., Markov does not discuss what is depicted in icons) but rather for its direct appeal to the senses and its keen handling of "materials." In both cases *faktura* emerges from objects which foreground their existence as material entities of visual or verbal language. The icon, as Ouspenskii writes, does not effect the viewer through an appeal to rational analysis but through the devices employed by the icon painter: the symmetry of design, the juxtaposition of color, and the texture of the gold leaf.³⁴ In their analyses of these forms both Khlebnikov and Markov underscore the sensual-spiritual vocabulary of the icon and prayers not for their allusiveness and mystical qualities, but for their specific handling of verbal and visual language in its immediate, material form.

It is important to note, however, that this fascination with the senses was not a concern for the mystical realms of Symbolism or the acute apperception of

the Romantic. Khlebnikov and Markov were not mystics. Khlebnikov, in particular, considered himself to be a rationalist, and this may provide the key to *zaum* and the investigations of icons and prayers. If we return to the previous discussion of art and spirit it becomes clear that Khlebnikov, Markov and many of their contemporaries felt no embarrassment over the apparent linking of art and spirit because they did not accept the icon or the prayer as mystical or eminently spiritual creations. Rather, these endeavors illustrate the critic Grigorii Revzin's description of the avant-garde's enduring desire to create "a rational language for the transmission of the irrational."³⁵ Revzin sees this tension as one of the essential contradictions of the Russian vanguard and a paradox for all who study it. One sees echoes of this philosophy throughout the 1910s and 20s as various theorists sought to find immutable laws for the random proclivities of the senses, especially in the aesthetic experiments carried out at INKhUK and the "composition/construction" debate carried out by the Working Group of Objective Analysis.

Another salient concept of the Russian avant-garde was the theory of "self-sufficiency."³⁶ This idea appears in numerous manifestoes and theoretical statements of the period. It may have first appeared in its fully articulated form in Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh's treatise "The Word as Such", published in 1913. In this essay they claim the *samovitoe slovo* (a neologistic expression usually translated as the "self-sufficient word") and the *slovo kak takovoe* ("the word as such") as the true goals of poetic art³⁷. These slogans may have first appeared in the writings of these poets but similar statements were made by a number of contemporary artists and critics. In "The Foundations of the New Creation and the Reasons for its Misunderstanding" Olga Rozanova declared that the "new basis for art" will be its "self-sufficient significance."³⁸ The contemporaneous writings of David Burliuk, Aleksandr Shevchenko and Ivan Puni also contain discussions revolving around the autonomy of the work of art and its utter self-referentiality.³⁹ However, this concept was taken up with particular vigor by the Formalist literary critics Viktor Shklovskii and Roman Jakobson. In Shklovskii's provocatively titled essay "The Resurrection of the Word" the critic lauds the self-sufficiency of the most recent Futurist poetry because it allows "...artistic perception, that is perception in which form is sensed."⁴⁰ In a discussion of "painterly" art Jakobson states, "the realized texture (*faktura*) no longer seeks any sort of justification for itself, it becomes autonomous, demands for itself new methods of formulation, new material."⁴¹ In these various texts the authors hold up "self-sufficiency" as the goal of all that is vital in art.

Jakobson, Shklovskii and their fellow Formalists would tirelessly popularize and elaborate upon this concept in the work of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and OPOIAZ (The Society for the Study of Poetic Language). The importance of "self-sufficiency" is closely related to *faktura* while it also suggests

similarities with the foregoing discussions of the icon. Self-sufficiency for the Formalists meant that language, whether visual or verbal, should exist first and foremost as a manifestation of material. Jakobson saw this kind of self-sufficient poetry, especially in Khlebnikov's works, as the ultimate expression of poetic language or "poeticity." Jakobson would later elaborate upon this idea: "Poeticity is present when the word is felt first as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion: when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and internal form acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality."⁴² Jakobson sees self-sufficiency and the accentuation of *faktura* as being opposed to the description of reality or the mere transcription of emotion. Returning to my earlier remarks about the icon, one sees that for Trubetskoi and Markov the icon was valued as a similarly self-sufficient, autonomous creation. The principal characteristics of the icon for them were its inverse perspective, heterogeneous composition and its opposition to descriptive illusionism. Indicative of this interest in the icon's unique space is Ouspenskii's statement: "In the icon space and volume are limited to the surface of the panel...it excludes all attempts to create an illusion of real space." Ouspenskii continues, noting "inverse perspective concentrates attention on the image itself."⁴³ Clearly, the icon existed as a supremely self-referential entity; one freed from the conventions of illusionism and representation of the outside world.

Having examined the broad implications of the icon, *faktura* and self-sufficiency as theoretical principles, let us now turn to the specific oeuvre of Vladimir Tatlin. Perhaps more than any other member of the Russian avant-garde, Tatlin was closely associated with the tradition of the icon, the utilization of *faktura* and the search for a purely self-sufficient work of art. He was also deeply enamored of the poetry of Velimir Khlebnikov (practically to the exclusion of all other literature).⁴⁴ Tatlin's early canvases and reliefs also demonstrate an ongoing dialogue with Cubism. Tatlin, like most of the Russian vanguard, followed artistic developments in France closely, though he, unlike many others, did not actually study in Paris. Preceding his brief but fateful voyage to Paris in 1913 the artist had become familiar with Cubism through the Russian artistic community in France (particularly Aleksandra Exter, Liubov Popova and Nadezhda Udaltsova) and the extensive holdings of Cubist art maintained in the collection of the industrialist Sergei Shchukin. At last, the ever impecunious Tatlin managed to travel to Paris in the winter of 1913 where he met Picasso and observed the artist's most recent sculptures. Soon after his return to Russia in May, 1914 Tatlin exhibited his remarkable reliefs and embarked upon the artistic enterprises that would establish his reputation as the first constructivist and one of the chief innovators of Russian art.

The importance of Cubism in Tatlin's oeuvre is undeniable. The artist adopted its flattened composition, textured canvas, collage aesthetic, and distorted perspective, yet these cubistic elements are not necessarily derived from Cubism. As Natalia Goncharova, a friend of the artist and co-exhibitor at the seminal *Donkey's Tail* exhibition of 1912, declared: "Cubism is a positive phenomenon, but it is not altogether a new one. Scythian stone images, the painted wooden dolls sold at fairs are those same cubist works." Goncharova was not alone in the conviction that Cubism had existed in Russia since ancient times, as one of the principal motivations for the *Donkey's Tail* exhibition was to assert the Eastern roots of the Russian avant-garde. In this atmosphere the vanguard actively pursued the conflation of Cubist innovations and the elaboration of indigenous traditions and innovations. Many examples of such combinations could be cited: Mikhail Matiushin's publication of Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger's *Du Cubisme* with parallel texts drawn from the Russian mystic P.D. Uspenskii, Goncharova's melange of forms derived from Scythian stone sculpture and the proto-Cubist canvases in the Shchukin collection or Malevich's combination of the theory of *zaum* with the pictorial conventions of Cubist collage. However, foremost among examples of native Cubism was the enduring tradition of the Russian icon. The artist-theorist Aleksandr Shevchenko wrote in comparing the *faktura* of Cubism and the icon, "Everywhere we see the same mixing of materials, the same principle of the variety of textures (*faktury*)."⁴⁵ The icon's peculiar morphological complexity, *faktura*, and self-contained existence all suggested comparisons with Cubism. For Tatlin such analogies would have been particularly apparent given that he began his career as a copyist of icons.⁴⁶ In his early canvases the artist utilized the devices of icon painting and Cubism as can be seen in works such as *Seated Nude* (1913, Tret'iakov Gallery, Moscow). Though the icon provided a direct impetus to the composition of many of this early paintings and drawings, Tatlin also created a growing body of works that emphasized the specific *faktura* of different media.

Following his sojourn to Paris, and still under the influence of Picasso, Tatlin created the pivotal transitional relief *Bottle* (1913, Whereabouts unknown). In it the encrusted metallic coverings and grooved haloes of icons are reflected, as well as Picasso's studies in the sculptural rendering of common objects. Again this presents the melange of cubistic devices and those of the icon. It also returns to the theme of the utter interpenetration of the supposedly ethereal realm of icons and the banality of everyday existence. In this relief the spiritual and the material meet once again in fluid dialogue rather than in opposition. The piece also emphasizes the study of *faktura* in a manner that Tatlin's earlier work had not. In *Bottle* Tatlin investigates the properties of surfaces and textures through the juxtaposition of a thoroughly heterogeneous variety of materials: metal, glass, string, wallpaper. Though even in this work the artist continued Picasso's

practice of subordinating the materials of the relief to the representation of an object.

This orientation can be attributed to Picasso's allegiance to an underlying "realism" in his works. Tatlin would break with this practice. Instead, he began to execute the reliefs and counter-reliefs that would garner great attention throughout the avant-garde. In these works (executed more or less contemporaneously with *Bottle*), such as *Painting Relief: Collation of Materials* (1914, Whereabouts unknown), Tatlin further accentuated his study of *faktura* through the removal of any depicted object. In these works and those that follow, Tatlin would fully incorporate the theory of self-sufficiency into his works. In these reliefs the artist allows the materials to "speak" without subjecting them to the tyranny of description. Instead, in the words of David Burliuk, "they live their own lives" as self-sufficient objects in space. Another aspect of Tatlin's reliefs and counter-reliefs is the artist's concern for the purity and inviolability of materials. Tatlin attempted to avoid all deformation of the substances incorporated into his reliefs. They were not to be bent to the artist's will but allowed to express their inherent forms, shapes, and unique properties of *faktura*.⁴⁷ In this concern Tatlin may have in mind the texts of the *podlinniki* and their advice for the icon painter to remain true to his materials. As Richard Temple writes in his article "The Painting of Icons," the process of icon production was intimately connected to the spiritualization of matter and the symbolic re-enactment of the Incarnation. According to Temple: "Techniques of painting were developed in the light of such ideas. This means that the great masters of icon painting had an understanding of the materials with which they worked that we can only approach today through microscopy, spectroscopy and molecular structure analysis."⁴⁸ With the reliefs of 1914 and the counter-reliefs of 1915 (saliently placed in the icon corner) Tatlin produced works that adroitly combined a continuation and elaboration upon the role of the icon in Russian culture while incorporating an acute sense of the *faktura* of surfaces and the self-sufficiency of materials.

The art of Vladimir Tatlin not only serves as a synthesis of the preceding discussions of the icon, *faktura* and self-sufficiency, it also recalls the dichotomy of the spiritual and the material in the Russian avant-garde. I submit that my original evocation of the opposed voices of spirituality and materialism in Malevich and Tatlin now presents a more complex situation. Upon closer examination it becomes clear that the icon was not connected exclusively to spirituality or mysticism, likewise *faktura* and self-sufficiency were not purely materialist concepts for the avant-garde. Instead, the apparently "material" finds its justification in the art of spirit, while reputedly mystical objects are transformed into the essence of material. I have endeavored to demonstrate that Tatlin and the Russian avant-garde frequently examined and appropriated the

putatively mystical and spiritual to fundamentally materialist and rationalist ends. Whether icons or prayers, these prototypically mystical cultural artifacts were addressed in a tone of scientific precision and logical deduction. Thus, when the critic finds references to the Orthodox liturgy in Khlebnikov's theoretical writings or the icon in Tatlin's reliefs this should not necessarily be accepted *ipso facto* as a token of spirituality and religio-transcendentalism. Indeed, it may be embarrassing to mention art and spirit in the same sentence, as Krauss would have it, yet in the context of the Russian avant-garde it is also difficult to know when to be embarrassed.

Notes and References

1. I. E. Grabar's massive *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva* (12 vols. Moscow : Akademiia nauk, 1963-69) presents many examples of these ambiguities in Soviet iconology.
2. Rosalind Krauss, "Grids" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1985), 12.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Yve-Alain Bois, "Malevich, le carre, le degre zero," *Macula* 1 (1976):28-49; Rainer Crone and David Moos, *Kazimir Malevich: The Climax of Disclosure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," *October* 30 (Fall 1984), 82-119.
5. Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 52-53.
6. Notable studies of the icon and the avant-garde have been produced by Anthony Parton, Dmitrii Lomachev, W. Sherwin Simmons, Alison Hilton and Olga Tarasenko among others.
7. Margaret Betz, "The Icon and Russian Modernism," *Artforum* 15 (Summer, 1977): 38-45.
8. *Ibid.*, 44.
9. *Ibid.*, 45.
10. Kniaz Evgenii Trubetskoi, " Umozrenie v kraskakh" in *Tri ocherka o russkoi ikone* (Moscow : Infoart, 1991): 4-38 and Vladimir Markov, " Printsipy tvorchestva v plasticheskikh iskusstvakh" (St. Petersburg, 1914).
11. Trubetskoi, "Umozrenie," 9.
12. Kazimir Malevich, " Ot kubizma k suprematizmu: Novyi zhivopisnyi realizm" (Moscow 1915), 14.
13. See the section devoted to the language of form and color in Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art.* trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover, 1977), 27-45.
14. There were no substantive studies of icons as " works of art" rather than religious or ethnographic objects until the close of the nineteenth century. see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art.* trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19-20.
15. Quoted in Trubetskoi, " Umozrenie," 14.
16. James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York : Vintage Books, 1970), 136-137.
17. Ouspenskii writes, " A significant feature of the technique of iconography is the selection of basic materials which enter into it. In their totality they represent the fullest participation of the

- visible world in the creation of an icon." in Leonid Ouspenskii, *The Meaning of Icons* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 55.
18. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*. trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 224.
 19. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 18.
 20. Trubetskoi, "Umozrenie," 104.
 21. Ironically Andy Warhol's comparably ambiguous *32 Soup Cans* were originally displayed in a similar leaning manner.
 22. Markov, "Printsipy tvorchestva," 54.
 23. A statement taken from a lecture given at New York University in spring, 1995.
 24. Markov, "Printsipy tvorchestva," 53 and Nikolai Tarabukin, *Le Dernier tableau* (Paris: Le Champ Libre, 1972), 102.
 25. Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 53.
 26. One of the more familiar statements concerning this theme is the Symbolist poet Aleksandr Blok's appeal for a "synthesis of the arts." "in order to remedy the backward state of Russian culture, in *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Kniga, 1965), 8, 213-214.
 27. It is unfortunate that Mark Cheetham in his excellent study, *The Rhetoric of Purity: Essentialist Theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), does not consider the contributions of Malevich and the Russian avant-garde.
 28. This locution sheds light on Khlebnikov's usage of the term *budetel'ianin* ("the ones who will be") rather than the western cognate *futurist*.
 29. Lotman remarks that a *zaum* word is not just sound; rather it is a signifier whose signified remains temporarily obscured; in Iurii Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta* (Providence: Brown University Slavic Reprints, 1971,) 178
 30. On this point I would disagree with Margit Rowell's claim that the poet "used the phonetic sound, the syllable, divested of historical or contextual connotation." in Margit Rowell, "Vladimir Tatlin: Form/Faktura" *October* 7 (Winter, 1978), 96. In fact, the poet was constantly studying the etymology of words and the effects of contiguity upon sounds and words.
 31. Velimir Khlebnikov, *Sobranie proizvedenii Velimira Khlebnikova*. ed. N. Stepanov and Iu. Tynianov (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisateli v Leningrade, 1928-1933), 5, 203.
 32. *Ibid.*, 198.
 33. Velimir Khlebnikov, *Tvoreniia*, ed. M. Ia. Poliakov (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1987), 633.
 34. Ouspenskii mentions that the iconographic canon proscribes not only "What" "but also how it should be depicted, by what means it is possible to indicate the presence of the grace of the Holy Spirit..." in *The Meaning of Icons*, 38.
 35. Grigori Revzin, "Novyi intellektualizm 1910 godov," *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo* 7-8 (1992): 17-18.
 36. In a recent article the Russian critic Natalia Adaskina has proposed that the question of "the autonomy of the work of art" coupled with "the investigation of artistic languages and the rejection of Aristotelian mimesis" form the crux of the "artistic theory" of the Russian avant-garde, see Natalia Adaskina, "Khudozhestvennaia teoriia russkogo avangarda i problema iazyka iskusstva" *Tvorchestvo* 1-4 (1994): 11-13.
 37. This interest in poetic self-sufficiency shares certain affinities with the poetic theory of the Italian Futurists (of which the Russians were undoubtedly aware).
 38. Olga Rozanova, "Osnovy novogo tvorchestva i prichiny ego neponimaniia" *Soiuz molod-ezhi* 3(1913), 20.

39. See Ivan Puni, *Manifest suprematizma* (Petrograd, 1915), David Burliuk, "Faktura" *Poshchechina obshchestvennoumum vkusu* (St. Petersburg, 1912) and Shevshenko, "Neoprimitivizm. ego teoria. ego vozmozhnosti. ego dostizheniia" (Moscow, 1923).
40. Viktor Shklovskii. *Voskre-shenie slova* (St. Petersburg, 1914), 28.
41. Roman Jakobson, "Futurizm" in *Raboty po poetike* (Moscow: Progress, 1987), 415.
42. Roman Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" trans from Czech. M. Helm in *Semiotics of Arts*, ed. L. Matejka and I. Titunik (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1976), 174.
43. Ouspenskii, *The Meaning of Icons*, 41.
44. John Milner discussess this relationship in *Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde*, as does Camilla Gray in *The Russian Experiment in Art*, 174.
45. Alksandr Shevchenko, "Printsiipy kubizma I drugikh sovremennykh techenii v zhivopisi vsekhn vremen I narodov," in *Mastera iskusstva ob iskusstve*, ed. A. A. Fedorov-Davydov (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1970), 500-501.
46. John Milner, *Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 24-26.
47. Ibid., 91-92.
48. Richard Temple, "The Painting of Icons" in John Baggley, *Doors of Perception: Icons and Their Spiritual Significance* (London: Mowbray, 1987), 99-100.

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Book Reviews

Michael Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth : Belief and responsibility in the twentieth century*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 260 (ISBN 0521 572606).

Myth (*Mythos*) is no more a homogeneous area of experience. Extensive researches in this area done by a host of scholars belonging to different disciplines of knowledge such as literature, philosophy, linguistics, religion and anthropology have sufficiently proved its richness and heterogeneity; and the use of different mythic modes in the poetry and narratives of the modernist culture have sufficiently demonstrated its aesthetic dimensions as well as its significance in the modernist world views. But the present author does not deal with myth as a traditional content or a means of literary organisation, but with "mythopoeia" or mythmaking which is an underlying outlook that creates myth. This mythopoeia has a double role in the modernist culture : it is not merely a foundational world view as such, it is also a living experience for him, as Thomas Mann says, " Although in the life of human race the mythic is indeed an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one". The relationship between ancient and modern that Mann suggests as the present author understands, implies a paradox of myth in relation to modernity, i.e. set against the backdrop of romantic aestheticism; fascist ideology is partly derived from the misuses of myth. But the author says this rejection of myth by Mann sets myth against myth "accepting that the sinister appeal of regressive political mythologies is to be overcome by a recognition of the mythopoeic basis of his own humanism" (p.2).

The author further understands that in the modernist tradition myth is not merely a form of mystification or an illusory search for origins. The inherent flexibility of the concept covers a wide-ranging area of semantics such as the liberal and deconstructive ironies of Mann and Joyce, Pound's totalised fascist vision of society and in between these two ends fall Yeats, Eliot and Lawrence. The modernist decades have assigned an important truth value to literature which in its mythopoeic model refers both to belief and falsehood rather elusively. In recent vocabulary, myth is supplanted by ideology. The author admits that his approach to mythopoeia in the modernist tradition is complementary to the approaches of MacIntyre and Rorty in the sense that while the former deals with the normal aspect of the issue and the latter misses the appreciation of conviction, he combines radical relativism with the apodictic nature of conviction, thus making the question of conviction and relativism central to his present study. In the three different sections of the book the modernist mythopoeia is treated in its German postromantic phase proceeding gradually through the early twentieth century poets and novelists such as Yeats, Joyce and Lawrence followed by Pound and Eliot with Conrad and Mann leading into the second half of the century, reaching finally the narrative fictions of Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Thomas Pynchon and Angela Carter.

The most original part of the study seems to be Professor Bell's observations on the way the modernist mythopoeia (or myth) is supplanted by the concept of "ideology" denoting a worldwide view that radically demystifies the modernist mythopoeic consciousness. He traces three historical phases in the growth of ideological consciousness - from the nineteenth century to the recent times, i.e. from Marx to the neo-Marxists like Jameson and Said through Orwell and Raymond Williams. In his evaluation of the process of this shift, Bell rightly observes that if myth deserved its defamation in the literary and political usages, the ideological critique too suffered the same kind of reduction. All works that can be characterised as art are not of equal significance. Therefore the value and commitment involved in the notion of artistic greatness cannot be assessed only by the process of demystification of artistic consciousness. In fact, the modernist sensibility did not mystify each and every value, it mystified the aesthetic values only which are of unique or extraordinary character. This uniqueness of some of the cultural values is to be recognised by the propounders of the ideological critique, even if they believe that "culture is ordinary". This recognition, a powerful phenomenon in the modernist sensibility, is remarkably suppressed by both Jameson and Said.

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David Quint, *Epic and Empire : Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. x +433.

In *Epic and Empire* David Quint presents a critique of the political ideology of epic, the most important genre of narrative since the classical period. He concentrates on the epic poetry, beginning with Virgil and Continuing through Camoses, Tasso, Lucan, Ercilla upto Milton. In the last chapter he takes up for discussion Sergei Eisentein's epic film *Alexander Nevsky*.

Dividing the bok into two principal sections Quint explores the ideological meaning of epic in terms of two major political traditions : one that celebrates conquests and legitimizes a concentrated imperial power structure, and the other that upholds republican liberty in a decentralized system of power. Accordingly, the epics of conquest, namely Virgil's *Aenied*, Camose's *Lusiads*, Tasso's *Jerusalemme liberta*, fall within the first tradition, while Lucan's *Phassalia*, Ercilla's *Araucana* and d' Aubingne's *Less Tragiques*, being the epics of the vanquished, belong to the second tradition. Quint argues convincingly that these traditions produced opposing ideals of historical narrative : a linear teleological narrative that belongs to the imperial conquerors and an episodic, open - ended narrative that gravitate towards 'romance' and becomes a story told of and by the defeated.

Aenied in Quint's discussion appears as a grand poetic scheme of imperialist ideology and sets the epic tradition of conquest and empire. The mnarrative progression that shows Aneas and Trojans transformed from losers at Troy to victors in Italy has a topical relevance to the political situation of Virgil's Rome, a nation in the Augustan period. The epics of the victors do contain the narratives of the curses, these narratives acknowledge the presence of opposing voices, dissenting perspectives and alternative histories to be placed alongside the official, triumphalist narrative of the victor that the epic privileges.

The episodic dismemberment of narrative finds full expression in *Pharsalia* and sets the tradition of the loser's epic. Its loose formal organization, being a distinctive feature of the loser's epic, manifests itself in the inconclusive endings and romance digressions of *Araucana* and the spatially ordered tableaux of *Less Tragiques*. The loose formal structure argues for a less centralized political arrangement running counter to Virgilian ideology of centralized power.

In the second section of the book Quint repeats the alternation between the above two traditions by focusing on the works of Tasso and Milton. While Tasso's *Jerusalemme liberata* affirms the cause of a triumphalist Counter - Reformation papacy much in Virgilian imperialist terms, Milton's *Paradise Lost* seems to uphold the autonomy of individual belief and contingency of free human desire in opposition to the ideology of absolutist modern state. Hence, the experience of Adam and Eve gets assimilated into the mode of romance and *Paradis Lost* conforms to the general movement of the seventeenth century in the direction of romance.

Even as writing of epic declined after Milton, these obtained a scope for the revival of medieval heroic poetry and recovery of "lost" national traditions of epic poems through the model of Macpherson's Ossian poems. Expanding their colonial frontiers, the bourgeois European nations celebrated their stories of doomed aristocratic heroism narrated through epic. Sergei Eisentein's communist film, *Alexander Nevsky*, is perhaps the last important product of the revival of heroic middle ages, says Quint.

Epic and Empire is a brilliant exercise in linking the epic t ext with its historical occasion through the investigation of textual allusions, both topical and poetic. By showing the links of the epic text to both political situation and poetic tradition of epic, this book makes a point of departure from poststructuralist critical practice, which treats literature only as cultural practice embedded in other practices in a widely conceived web of intertextual relationships. Quint chooses to remain respectful towards the humanist notions about epic text being the formalization of weighty and conservative genre. He thus awards due importance to generic conventions and formal features of the epics as part of a literary tradition while discussing the ideological meaning of individual texts.

In Quint's scheme of argument, the term "ideology" is highly elastic in its function. Its function moves between individual epic text and contiuous epic tradition. It means to him/ Jameson's sense / imaginary or "formal" solutions to "unresolvable social contradictions". It not merely produces a master narrative to subsume any historically contingent sitation but also, more specifically, it assimilates

into epic's inherited formal and narrative structures a whole series of cultural and psychic associations accounting for the imaginative appeal of a given passage in a text.

Quint's book bears the impress of scholarly seriousness, which is leavened by a highly lucid and engaging style.

Ashok K. Mohapatra

Pathak, R.S. *Indian Response to Literary Theories*, Vol. II, New Delhi : Creative Books , 1996, pp. viii + 251.

Patnaik, P., *Rasa in Aesthetics : An Application of Rasa Theory to Modern Western Literature*, New Delhi, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 1997, pp. xvi+281.

The most important development in the academic study of literature in the West during the last forty years is the phenomenal growth of literary theories. This development was obviously a reaction against the supposed theoretical practice of criticism that entrenched itself in the university departments of literature under the influence of New Criticism. The climate of theoretical speculation in the West inspired in India revival and reinterpretation of Sanskrit and classical Tamil literary theories. It also led to an upsurge of comparative studies of Indian theories and their Western analogues as well as application of Indian theories in the analysis of Western literary texts. The two books under review represent these concerns of the Indian academics today.

The standards of scholarship and critical analysis as evidenced by the books are uneven and the responses enshrined therein do not bear out any characteristic Indianness in terms of attitude and methodology. This is the sad fact of contemporary Indian criticism and scholarship that even after many years of academic study of literature, it has not been possible to develop a distinctively Indian critical and scholarly practice. While contemporary Indian creative literature can flaunt its Indianness, works of criticism and literary scholarship remain mostly parasitic on Western models.

Professor Pathak's anthology consists of two sections, each containing nine essays, the first one dealing with interactions of Western and Indian theories and the second with applications of different theories for studying individual texts. Krishna Rayan studies the role of *Vibhavas* or objects in aesthetic experience examining the poetics of *Tolkappiyam*, Eliot's theory of 'objective correlative' and Wimsatt and Beardsley's essay, "The Affective Fallacy". Following the latter, he suggests that the term "objects" is to be defined inclusively to embrace plot, character and language of the text and as the suggesters of emotion, the objects are to be the principal concern for a marriage between New critical practice and *Rasa* theory. He, however, ignores the radical questioning of the New Critical dogma by the later theorists.

If Prof. Rayan is a neo-Newcritic, Prof. P.S. Sastri, the only other old guard among the Indian academics represented in the anthology, is a new-Neo - Aristotelian. His essay, "Plot and *Rasa* in a Lyric", is a detailed examination in the Chicago School manner of Elder Olson's view of the lyric with references to Aristotle, Bharata and Abhinavagupta and analyses several American and British critics. For Sastri, plot is "The imitation of an activity" and in the lyric, the activity is that of "the inner life of man". "The Indian analogue to Aristotle's concept of plot appears to, be *rasa*". This assumption is an unexamined one and the analogy is not worked out in the essay, despite its being the longest in the anthology running to thirty two pages.

In "Dynamics of the Reader -Response", the editor examines the role of the reader in aesthetic experience in several Western theories and observes that the Western theories in general, emphasize the cognitive rather than the affective aspect of reading experience. On the other hand, the Indian view of *sahrdaya* and his experience turns out to be more comprehensive and systematic and, therefore, can provide a better basis for the formulation of the laws of literary experience. Curiously enough, while advancing his thesis, the author completely ignores the problematic of his position. The concepts of the Reader - Response theories oppose the ideal reader, the *sahrdaya*, willing to escape from his ego, identify with the work and immerse himself completely in the experience embodied in the literary work. How can the concept of *sahrdaya* - albeit an obsolete one for these later day theories - satisfy the Deconstructionists, the Feminists and the New Historicists ?

Other contributors to the section on "Interactions", however, restrict themselves to patient and careful comparisons of details rather than rusting to advance large claims. Prof. Kushwaha studies the dramatic theories of Bharata and Aristotle and notes the similarities and differences between those meticulously. Bharata is again pitted against Stanislavsky by points as regards creativity and aesthetic experience. A.K. Singh examines *Vakrokti* and Russian Formalism and observes similarities in respect of defamiliarisation device and the like while noting the difference of approach to the creative activity and creator in the two systems.

A.C. Sukla's study of the sister arts theory, particularly *ut pictura poesis* in India and the West, is a model of comparative criticism. Sukla makes a detailed survey of the genesis, growth and decay of the theory in the West with a coda on its recent revival. He interposes a discussion on the development and eventual rejection of the theory in India investigating in the process the ontology of art, reality and representation to justify this rejection. Sukla's comprehensiveness is marked in another paper of this section in "Theory of the Novel : The Indian view" by Kapil Kapoor. It is a fine study of the theory of narrative fiction in India detailing the various sub-genres and the constitutive elements. Kapoor's contribution does not fit to the particular comparative scheme of this section of the book and so does Rai's perceptive study of Brecht's influence on contemporary Indian dramatists.

The section on "Applications" is still more an assortment of papers without any definite perspective such that one feels that those are there to fill in certain number of pages of the volume. Papers on Linguistic and New Historicist approaches in the study of literature survey the gains and losses accrued from such approaches. Prof. Mohan Thampi details the principles of western rhetoric and Indian *alamkara* and recommends a mode of practical criticism on those principles, but his demonstration - an analysis of Arnold's "Dover Beach" - fails to carry conviction about the efficacy of his scheme. However, R.S. Sharma's application of *Rasa* theory to the study of the Burial of the Dead" section of "The Waste Land" is a very perceptive and rewarding attempt. One would like to see more of Indian academics trend on Sharma path and help develop a truly Indian response to literature.

Some of the papers of the sections are rather old-fashioned, as for example, structural analysis of D.H. Lawrence's "St. Mawr" and the archetypal analysis of *Serpent and the Rope*. Three very interesting papers adopt the sociological approach. D.S. Mishra gives a complete review of the principles of Bakhtin's dialogics and applies the same to an analysis of *The River Sutra*. Dharanidhar Sahu presents a fine study of Shakespeare's Thersites by using Bakhtin's idea of carnival. Sudhir Kumar's study on the construction of a nation in some novels by Muslim authors seeks to establish the politics of writing and its reception. Despite the limitations, the anthology will serve its purpose of arousing interest in literary theorists for which Prof. Pathak is to be congratulated.

Dr. Priyadarshi Patanaik's book is a laudable attempt at expounding the principles of *Rasa* theory in an exhaustive manner and applying the same in the analysis of some modern Western literary texts. What attracted Patnaik to the study of *Rasa* theory is, as he says, its fundamental insight that emotions are basic to all literature and concern with the variety of emotions, their constituents and models of presentation in literary works. The author asserts that in the present day academic world where theories vie with one another in being more technical and riddled with intricate dialects, the *rasa* theory has a simplicity and directness of approach that makes it more relevant for study and enjoyment of literature. Patnaik divides his book into ten chapters apart from the Introduction and the Conclusion. Two of the chapters are devoted to the exposition of *rasa* and its varieties in general followed by one chapter for each of the nine *rasas* while combining the *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* into one chapter.

In his discussion of *rasa* in general and the different *rasas* in particular, Patnaik draws on the *Natyasastra* and translations and hardly uses the insights of other theorists. No reason is adduced for this limitation imposed on the work attempted here. The texts subjected to *rasa* analysis are varied enough comprising those by Kafka, Mayakovsky, Eliot, Lorca, Hemingway, Hesse, Camus, Neruda, Beckett, Ionesco and a host of others spanning the three main literary genres of poetry, drama and fiction. The texts come from a variety of cultures : British, American, Latin American, European, Chinese, Japanese and like. The aim of establishing the universality of *rasa* and its applicability in

criticism has been carried through with remarkable competence. There is, however, a limitation in the methodology chosen for the analysis of the texts which are deductively used to illustrate particular points of the theory.

Patnaik seems not to have benefited from the examples of applied criticism in Sanskrit theoretical works and prefers to resort to paraphrase and statement of them characteristic of the Western critical practice. The author leaves out consideration of a basic problem in *rasa* analysis : how *rasas* identified in parts of a work can explain the *rasa* of the work as a whole. However, Dr. Patnaik's scholarship, analytical acumen and sensitivity to literary nuances as well as his taste in literature are commendable. One can not but acclaim his labours in this original work.

H. Panda

Bharat Gupt (Trans. and ed. with introduction) *Natyasastra* (of Bharata Muni), Chapter 28, Brahaspati Publications, New Delhi, 1993, pp. XXVIII + 203.

After his *Dramatic Concepts : Greek and Indian* Bharat Gupt renders recently a very useful service to the area of Indian musicology by translating one of the nine chapters Bharata devoted (28-36) to Indian *Gandharva* or Musicology (in his *Natyasastra*), into English. In doing so, he closely followed the commentaries of his teacher Acharya Brahaspati. The intention in translating the 28th chapter is to highlight the basic principles of Indian music such as *Svara*, *grama*, *murcchana*, *sruti* and *jati* as observed by the founders of Indian musical system -Bharata and his followers/ Matanga/ Bhoja and Sarngadeva etc. who were almost forgotten owing to the unavailability of their texts in print and in the event of which modern musicians like Bhatkhande and his printed compositions readily available were accepted as authorities in Indian musical tradition. Voices have also been raised that Bharata's music was rather an subordinate performance in accompaniment of the theatre than an autonomous art form. It is true that Bharata's *Sastra* deals with *abhinaya* or *natavyapara* as a whole, verbal art, visual art and histrionics forming its necessary constituents, and that literature, music and dance attained their autonomy not less than some five to seven centuries later. But Bharat's account of the *gandharva* is the most indispensable one in studying the fundamentals and authentic form of Indian music that developed from the Vedic tradition not only till the time of Bharata but also guiding the subsequent tradition that was not unnaturally susceptible to foreign influences in attaining its originality all through. Bharata's musical system is therefore not merely an historical phenomenon for us. It is of great philosophical significance that characterises the *Indianness* of Indian music and warns us against any confusion or cultural meddling that definitely threatens our cultural identity and aesthetic principles.

In his long introduction of twenty-eight pages, Gupt has offered a brief but illuminating picture of Bharata's system in comparison with the modern Indian practices, particularly his contextual references to the ancient Greek tradition inspire and encourage a strong desire, while setting the methodology, for the foundation of a new discipline which could properly be termed as comparative musicology (following the disciplines like comparative literature, comparative philosophy, comparative mythology, comparative religion etc.). In fact, when a contemporary connoisseur distinguishes "pure music" from its verbal association of any sort, Bharata's stress on the role of language in the generation of musical meaning (*artha nispati*) is of great philosophical significance which needs deeper aethetical analyses challenging the western theories and practices. This area is of absorbing interest and warrants immediate attention of both musicologists and musicians. Gupta writes :

"The present day utility of the twenty eighth chapter of the *Natyasastra* is not only for establishing continuity of Indian music by highlighting its characteristics like *Vadita*, *nyasa*, *apanyasa*, *sadava*, *andava* etc., but also for reconstructing the *jatis* as melodies. The *jatis* can be sung and played as the *ragas* and in doing so the *alapana* of the *jatis* is bound to sound like the *alampana* of the contemporary *ragas*... because the embellishments and ornamentations are contemporary and thus the result sounds like present day music" (p. XXV).

In translating the original *Natyasastra* with Acharya Brhaspati's commentary on it Gupt has wisely avoided any use of the parallel terms in Western usage. That would have resulted in great

confusion rather than any conceptual clarity. But a reader feels that there should have been the commentary of Abhinavagupta as well preceding *Sanjivanam* producing thereby a complete scholasharship in the area. Perhaps Gupt would consider this suggestion worthwhile to incorporate Abhinava in the second edition of this work and would also incorporate the same in his forthcoming translation of the seventeenth chapter of *Natyasastra*.

Needless to say, musicologists and aestheticians in general are greatly benefited by Gupt's contribution, for which he, with his vast areas of experience in both performing music and theoretical understanding, seems to be singularly qualified in contemporary India. His further contributions are eagerly awaited.

A.C. Sukla

Krishna Jain, *Description in Philosophy : with Special Reference to Wittgenstein and Husserl*, D.K. Printworld, Delhi, 1994

The 20th century philosophy is marked by a shift of emphasis from the speculative philosophy to descriptive philosophy, from system building to piece-meal analysis, from Reality (with a capital R) to language and meaning. Yet this new trend in philosophy has been pursued in totally divergent background and set-up. The British and American philosophers (under the influence of British School) followed the line of linguistic analysis. But in Europe the phenomenologists followed a different path of analysis. In spite of certain strong points of similarities there is a tendency to dismiss one by the other. Those who are trained in Logico-linguistic analysis believe that phenomenological analysis is not worth it and vice versa. Even if the feeling of mutual neglect is no more that strong in present Indian academic scenario there seems to be a barrier in understanding both the parallel movements in a dispassionate way. Krishna Jain's book *Description in Philosophy* breaks this barrier and comes up with a brilliant exposition of both these trends as far as they claim to pursue the course of descriptive philosophy. Ms Jain in the preface of the book very clearly states "We are not ... concerned with the similarities and dissimilarities between Wittgenstein's analytical philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology but with the manner they pursued the concept of descriptive philosophy in their own philosophical set up".

In the 20th century, especially since 1920's philosophers have shown a clear aversion for speculative philosophy. The emphasis on a neat structure and order without caring for 'what there is' or 'what is given'. P.F. Strawson in his book *Individuals* brings out very clearly the distinction between the descriptive metaphysics and what he prefers to call the revisionary metaphysics in the following manner "Descriptive metaphysics is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world, the revisionary metaphysics is concerned to produce a better structure". For both - the ordinary language philosophers, including Strawson, and the phenomenologists like Husserl, aim at excavating the basic elements out of what is 'given either in language or in perception. As the author of the book puts very aptly, "A descriptive philosopher is satisfied with the elementary data i.e., with the basic bricks which are 'given' to him. He does not aspire to construct theories or systems out of them". His method is analytical and his aim is clarification of the philosophical puzzles. So both Husserl and Wittgenstein approach their task concentrating on the problem of 'meaning'. Besides, both the philosophers claim to dissociate themselves from psychologism and empiricism, (as it is understood in ordinary philosophical parlance).

The first chapter of the book entitled 'The Concept of Description' very lucidly brings out the basic features of descriptive philosophy, on the one hand she demarcates the scope and method of descriptive philosophy, on the other hand she keeps on showing the distinction between the Hussrian

approach and the Wittgensteinian approach in very clear terms. It is no mean task and the introductory chapter itself ushers in the readers to follow her analysis of Wittgenstein and Husserl presented in subsequent chapters without any bias and unfounded presuppositions.

However, the last two chapters on the limits of Description and hazards of philosophical Description really deserves attention. She very clearly brings out the paradoxes involved in outcome of pursuing the programme of descriptive philosophy by both - Wittgenstein and Husserl, the goal of pure descriptive philosophy. Both despised system building and in other words metaphysics of any sort. Yet both of them in their last analysis end up with the concepts of 'forms of life' and 'life-world', respectively. These concepts serve as the limits of description and they truly belong to the area of 'showing' rather than 'saying'.

But what is the basic nature of these two limiting concepts ? If their structure is fixed then we are back to 'revisionary metaphysics' if not speculative metaphysics. And if they accept that the concepts of 'forms of life' and 'life-world' are dynamic and they are not free of socio-cultural frame-work then their programme may lead us to philosophical anthropology. The way the author exposes the 'hazards' makes one convinced that there is no final word in philosophy.

The book published in 1994 has already become very popular with the scholars as also useful for the students who often grapple with the philosophical thoughts of these two very difficult philosophers and often are left with too many questions unanswered.

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Madhusudan Pati, *Bhagavadgita : A Literary Elucidation* , Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1997, PP.210.

The text of the *Bhagavadgita* (commonly known as the *Gita*) containing eighteen chapters of seven hundred stanzas was composed sometime between the 2nd half of the 2nd c. and the 1st half of the 1st century B.C. by a dualist school of devotees of Lord Visnu known as *Ekanti Vaisnavas* and the text was later interpolated into the *Mahabharata*. The title in its feminine gender is an adjective for noun *Upanisad* (feminine gender in Sanskrit) omitted in use. Thus the title means "An upanisad sung by Bhagawan (Sri Krishna)". Although it has been treated as a philosophical text by its innumerable commentators over centuries from Sankara (8th C. A.D.) till date, the very title suggests that it is basically a literary genre - a 'song' or 'Gita'. As S.N. Dasgupta has stated : "It is its lack of system and method which gives it its peculiar charm more akin to the poetry of the upanisads than to the dialectical and systematic Hindu thought." But the text has so far been rarely treated as a literary genre of the Upanisadic nature as Dasgupta has very rightly observed. Even Abhinavagupta (10th C. AD) India's most celebrated aesthetician has not done so in his commentary, although he has noted the allegorical character of the text while accommodating the text's *message* within his own school of Kashmirian non-dualism.

Among the moderns, Wilhelm Von Humboldt, who understood the *Gita* "as the most beautiful, presumably the only real philosophical poem of all known literatures", has traced its "rich philosophical ideas" rather than any literary characteristics. Similarly, Aurobindo has sought for a "message" in the text though not by any "scholastic or academic scrutiny" : "We approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message, on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare". Even Dasgupta himself has read the *Gita* as a philosophical text, rather than as a poetic text of the Upanisadic genre.

Against this background, a reader of Pati's title is immediately enthusiastic for finding out the points which have been omitted by Abhinavagupta and Dasgupta as also expects from a literary scholar of Pati's rank (mentioned in the jacket of the book) interpretation of a philosophical poem imbibing insights and arguments from recent interdisciplinary canons developed by Western scholars : for example, Stephen D. Ross (*Literature and Philosophy* 1969) and Stein Haugom Olsen ("Thematic Concepts : where Philosophy meets Literature" in *Philosophy and Literature*, ed. by A.P.Griffiths, 1984). Though the genres elucidated by these authors vary—Ross's being novels by Hesse, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Camus

and Olsen's being Euripides' play *Hippolytus* — both of them agree that "literary appreciation always and necessarily involves the recognition of theme...thematic concepts are constitutive of literary appreciation, and the nature of thematic concepts becomes a central problem in literary aesthetics....literary interpretation should employ conceptual frameworks which are not only not generally known to an educated public but which are dependent for their significance on special theories about the human mind, society, language etc." These thematic concepts such as freedom, determinism, responsibility, weakness of will, human suffering, divine order, purity, pollution, forgiveness in terms of which Olsen interprets *Hippolytus* are obviously philosophical phenomena, which define *mortal questions* the questions which are concerned with "mortal life : how to understand it and how to live it". They are permanent foci of interest in a culture because they are unavoidable. The concepts which define these mortal questions are the fingerprints of the culture.

Needless to say, the Gita abounds in these mortal questions : determinism/freedom of will, action/inaction/evil action(Karma/ akarma/vikarma), love/detachment, divinity/mortality, man-in-God/ God-in-man so on and so forth. Finally, the language of the Gita, modelled upon the language of the Upanisads is essentially the language of metaphor, irony and paradox, the paradigms of poetic expression theorised by the New critics and illustrated *per se* by T.S. Eliot.

The *Gita* is a narrative within a narrative and the whole of this narrative represents the psychic events rather than any physical action of the protagonist who is initially a demigod finally metamorphosed to a God-in-man, the *sumum bonum* of human life that answers to a number of *mortal questions*. The reader of Pati's books rightly expects a systematic analysis of the structure of the narrative distinguishing several phases of the metamorphosis of the protagonist in different chapters and there should have been a separate chapter on the language of this narrative. But instead the reader is bored by the canto-wise-commentary type of chapterisation without any titles although the text itself bears separate titles for different chapters.

Pati rightly considers the narrative as an *itihasa* itself within a longer *itihasa*. But he confuses *itihasa* with history. Abhinavagupta's analysis of the term *itihasa* in his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* (Chap.I) has demonstrated the Indian sense of *itihasa* as a series of events not chronologically happening but archetypally recurring. The author writes a paragraph on the nature of the poetry of the Gita: "It is therefore a specific kind of poetry that is pressed into service here poetry that is non-discursive, non-ornamented and immediately visionary, poetry that is dramatically self-conscious, but yet essentially self-effacing. It is a poetry which is in close conformity with its philosophy, one that is appropriate to the mood both of detached, inspired action, and of *Prapatti*. It is poetry, again, which is in intimate correspondence with the qualities of the protagonists involved in the drama, spanning the ordinarily human and the awe-inspiringly cosmic, the metaphysical and the philosophical exquisitely merging into each other. But for all that, it is poetry of a high order, one that consistently effaces itself for high drama and high philosophy, and yet retains its special distinctiveness and power. The philosophy of the poem is a part of an *itihasa*; The message is addressed to a particular mood in a given situation, its universals being made pointedly meaningful in a given context. Poetry, therefore, acquires here a profound functional validity", (PP 2-3).

The entire paragraph is only full of sound and fury; and without proper definition and application of the ideas in the text itself it signifies nothing. It is very hard to understand the difference between philosophy and metaphysics that the author frequently draws. Most surprisingly contradictory is the author's statement against his proposal that he has highlighted the significant elements of poetic style and dramatic structure *only selectively at particular points*, (P.VI).

When the whole book is designed to elucidate the Gita as a literary text, a dramatic poem then how could he highlight the poetic style and the dramatic structure *only selectively* ?

The author's knowledge of Sanskrit is obviously poor. One of the several mistakes he commits in interpreting Sanskrit words is his translation of the root *muh* in *buddhim mohaya siva me* as

“ambivalent” and self-contradictory- the proper meaning being “confusing one’s understanding”: His complain against the English translations of the Gita as failing to capture the tonal beauties of the original (P.VI) is only pretentious, he himself failing to capture these beauties. He should be aware of Humboldt’s experience in this regard...“ I concede that one who reads it in a translation only, even the best one, can not have such a feeling. The translation of such a work is like the description of a painting: colours and light are missing”. Pati’s failure in commenting on the poetic language of the Gita is obviously due to his lack of necessary acquaintance with the nuances of Sanskrit language in general and with the Sanskrit poetic style in particular. The poorest show of the book is the absence of a bibliography. How many translations he has consulted ? Is only two-those of Chinmayanada and Goenka- as he writes in the preface ? Biharilal’s Oriya translation follows Sridhara’s (14thc. A.D.) Sanskrit commentary. Among the galaxy of commentators from Sankara to Madhusudana Saraswati, apart from Wilkins, A.W.Schlegel, Humboldt and Hegel how does the author dare to choose only three!- recording his “perceptions and reactions in a free unpretentious manner”? Even Sankara the first commentator of the Gita had to labour very hard to cover all the scriptures that preceded him. Even the Gita itself refers to *Brahmasutras* and Sankhya-Yoga system(s) of thought that preceded its composition. To put it ironically, without any notes of reference, without any bibliography, without any acknowledgement to any of the critics, translators and commentators Pati’s book appears more apocalyptic than the Apocalypse itself !

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